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IN THE FACE OF THE WORLD

A Novel

BY

ALAN ST. AUBYN

AUTHOR OF 'A FELLOW OF TRINITY,' 'THE JUNIOR DEAN,' ETC



IN TWO VOLUMES

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v. 1

To

ARCHDEACON FARRAR

THE ADVOCATE OF SPECIAL INDIVIDUAL EFFORT

THE ENTIRE CONSECRATION OF SELF-DEVOTED LIVES TO

GRAPPLE EFFECTUALLY WITH THE PROBLEMS OF SIN AND SUFFERING

OF WRONG AND WRETCHEDNESS

WHICH THREATEN THE STABILITY OF OUR MODERN CIVILIZATION

THIS NOVEL

WITH HIS VERY KIND PERMISSION

IS DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR

Ms. Langdon 17 Nov 53

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IN THE FACE OF THE WORLD

CHAPTER I.

GOING DOWN.

‘ Armed with his dainty, ribbon-tied degree,
Pleased and yet pensive, Exite and A.B.’

It was the last night of term. Everyone was ‘going down.’ Some of the men who were ‘going down’ would come up again next term to apply themselves with renewed vigour to their work or to their play ; to live again the old happy, thoughtless life, to repeat the old follies, to make the old mistakes.

Others were ‘going down,’ really and altogether, for the last time. They would never come up again. The old college days, with their bright

memories, were all over. For them University life, with its hopes and ambitions, its heartburnings and failures, its rewards and distinctions, was already a thing of the past. They had taken their degrees, they had been sorted and labelled according to their merit, and they were 'going down.'

How quickly the years had run !

' One wave, two waves, three waves, four—
Gliding up the sparkling floor;
Then they ebb to flow no more,
Wandering off from shore to shore
With their freight of golden ore !'

A man who was 'going down' had just recalled the dear old Autocrat's lines, and was moralizing upon them on that last night. He had been up four years, and he had taken a First in two Triposes. He was a Wrangler and the Senior Theologian of his year. He had taken such high honours that he was sure of a Fellowship. His college was justly proud of him. It did not turn out many 'Double Firsts.' It had only turned out one Senior Wrangler in a hundred years. It had

sent out into the world a good many theologians, who did respectably in their calling—quite respectably—and who, it was remarked of them, always did their duty. If St. Neot's had not produced many brilliant scholars, it had sent out, year after year, a larger number of good average men—men who had drifted into the Church and done good work there, but never risen to distinction—than any other college of its size in Cambridge. Now it had turned out a scholar.

Harold Beech's success created quite a flutter among the Dons of St. Neot's. There was not a Fellowship vacant, or they would have presented it to him forthwith; but they offered him a lectureship, and begged him to stay among them and take pupils.

But Harold Beech was not to be entreated. His work here was quite done, he told them. It had never been his intention to stop here, cooped up in these old walls, living a slow, musty life, when there was a great wide world outside this

place — there was all Christendom—clamouring for champions. He had been getting his armour ready all this time; he had been proving it, and testing it, and getting used to wielding the weapons the University had put into his hands, and now he must needs go out in the world and use them.

He had nothing to detain him a day longer in Cambridge. He had taken his degree, and he had packed his books, and his clothes, and his new B.A. hood, and his well-worn surplice, and his shabby undergraduate gown. He had little else to pack. His income had been too slender to waste it upon bric-à-brac, to buy anything, indeed, that he could do without, so that when the time came to go away he had very little to pack.

He had corded the box of books, and tightened the strap of his portmanteau, and taken a half-regretful look round the old room, at the empty shelves, and the table where he had worked, and he had gone over in the sweet June twilight to say

good-bye to a college friend who, like himself, was 'going down' on the morrow.

Tristram Lushington had taken his degree, only a Poll degree, and his life here was ended. He was a pale, pensive-looking young man with the face of a poet. He had no right to look like a poet, for he was only a brewer. At least, his father was a brewer, an enormously rich London brewer, and he was his eldest son; he would be worth by-and-by something like a million, perhaps two millions, of money. He had everything now, in those handsome college rooms of his, that money would buy—pictures, books, china, carvings, tapestry, objects of art, and articles of *vertu* in endless variety. The eye was quite weary with travelling over the beautiful things that were scattered about on walls and tables in such profusion.

'It's deuced slow "going down," old fellow, with all one's dreams unrealized,' the poet, or rather the brewer, remarked thoughtfully, knocking the ashes out of the pipe he had been smoking. 'I had made

up my mind to do so much when I came up—and—and I have done nothing.'

Harold Beech smiled. He was sitting at the open window, looking down at the slow dark waters of the Cam that flowed beneath, at the college bridges, and the willows, and the beautiful greenery of the Backs. He had seen these things hundreds of times before, but to-night they seemed to have a new interest to him. Because he was going away, perhaps.

'No,' he said, smiling, 'I suppose not. A great many men come up intending to do great things, but they seldom do them. What did you propose to do?'

'I? Oh, there was so much I was going to do; I hardly know where I was going to begin.'

'But you must have had some definite plans.'

'Oh yes, I had some definite plans. They were not all dreams. I was going——'

'What were you going to do?' Harold Beech asked, seeing he paused.

‘I—I was going to get up a University Temperance League. I was going to start a New Crusade.’

‘You—you!’

Harold Beech didn’t exactly laugh, but he could not keep a tone of mocking incredulity out of his voice. He was sorry for it a moment after, when he saw a white, pained look come into the other’s face.

‘I don’t wonder at your crying out “You!”’ Tristram said bitterly. ‘It was the dread of the derision it would bring down on me, it was the fear of what men would say, that kept me back, and now—now—the opportunity is gone!’

‘There are plenty more opportunities, if you are really in earnest,’ Harold said cheerfully. ‘I don’t think from your position—which you couldn’t help, but which everybody would remember—you would have done much here, and you have the world before you.’

Tristram shook his head sadly.

‘I have lost an opportunity,’ he said; ‘I shall

never meet these men again. They have gone their way, and I am going mine, and our paths may never cross again. Think what I might have done in three years in this place, by my influence, by my example, if I had been brave enough, if I had been manly enough, to come out and take a stand ! We, I and the rest—there would have been many gather round me if I had come out—we should have carried all before us. Oh, you don't know what the force of example is ! It would have been another Crusade ; only, instead of rescuing the empty tomb of our risen Lord, we should be rescuing the souls and bodies of our fellow-men !'

His pale, pensive face had flushed, and his pale blue eyes were shining, and he was trembling with eagerness.

Harold Beech's face was flushed too ; it was a brave, strong face, but the tell-tale blood would leap up into it in a moment.

'I know something about example,' he said, feeling his way, and with his voice not quite

steady; 'but—but I don't quite catch what you mean. You surely do not mean——'

He stopped, and looked at the other across the table. Their eyes met, and a question that was unspoken was answered in the June twilight.

'I do mean,' said the brewer eagerly. 'Good Heavens! Beech, what else could I do? I mean to throw the whole business up!'

They sat silent in the darkling room, while the sweet June night rose outside, and the shadows collected in the corners, and a faint breath of air, like a sigh, was wafted in at the open window. It was so faint that neither of the men felt it, but it stirred the petals of a rose that was blooming in a pot on the window-ledge, and scattered them on the pavement of the court beneath; it moved the peacock-feathers over the mirror, it rustled the papers that were scattered about the table—it was like a hand in the room moving everything.

'Have you counted the cost?' Harold Beech said, breaking the silence.

‘Yes; I have counted the cost.’

His voice was fairly steady, but there was a faint quiver in it; he could not keep the quiver out of it.

‘Do your people know? Have you told them——’

‘I have told no one!’ Tristram interrupted impatiently; ‘I only made up my mind to-day. I only made it up an hour ago. If I had made it up before, I should have done differently. I should not have lost these three years.’

‘Are you sure you have not decided hastily? Think; it is a great deal to give up. Are you sure you will not reconsider it?’

‘For God’s sake, don’t tempt me, Beech! You, above all men! I am sure of nothing. I only know I have made up my mind—I have taken a vow. See here, I have written it down. I could not be sure of myself if I had not written it down. I am not doing it in my own strength. I should not keep it a day if—if it depended on my own

weak will. I have committed it all to God—my weakness, and my desire to get rid of this burden that has been weighing upon me for years. I have sworn on my knees never to touch a penny of that accursed money; and I am trusting to the Lord Jesus, who has put it in my heart, to give me strength to keep the oath I have taken. See, read it for yourself.'

He pushed a paper towards Beech as he spoke, a paper with some writing on it in a shaky, almost illegible hand. The ink seemed still wet, or it had been blotted and blurred by some big drops that had fallen and blistered the page.

Harold Beech read the opening words on the paper, 'O God, who art the Strength of all who put their trust in Thee——' and then a mist came before his eyes, and he pushed the paper away from him.

'It is between you and God,' he said; 'it was not written for human eyes. I am sure you have done right, Lushington. Feeling as you do, you

could do nothing else. But you will find it harder than you think; you will meet with great opposition. How will you break it to your father?’

‘I have thought about all that. I have thought of all—everything. I shall go to him at once, and tell him all. He has another son. There is Cecil. It will be a great disappointment to him. People will say that I am mad—a fanatic.’

‘They will say that you have the courage of your opinions, which few men have.’

‘They may say what they will. It is not of the world I am thinking—what men may say. The world’s praise or blame is a very small matter to me. In doing this—that has been borne upon my soul that I *must* do, that I cannot help doing—I am not only flying in the face of the world, but I am giving up what I value most on earth—the woman I love.’

Harold Beech smiled his slow, quiet smile.

‘I don’t think you should put these things in the same category—the love of a woman and the loss

of a great fortune. They have nothing to do with each other. Money and love ! They ought not to be named in the same breath.'

'Oh, you don't know, Beech—how should you?' Tristram said, with a touch of impatience in his voice. 'If—if I give up the brewery, I shall have to give up the girl I am engaged to. Mary Gascoigne would never marry me without the brewery. She has been counting upon it, and her mother has been counting upon it. It is all we shall have to live upon.'

'No,' said the other, with a sudden flush of colour in his face ; 'you are quite right. How should I know ? The women I am accustomed to meet, in my own station, have another standard. They do not measure a man by his money. No woman whose love was worth the name could throw over a man who did this noble thing.'

'You think so?' Tristram said eagerly ; 'you think she will look at it in that light ?'

'If she loves you, she can do no other. It will

be a test of her love. It is better that it should be tried now than after—when it is too late. It may be the alchemy that was needed to purge the dross away from it; to make it shine like gold—pure gold.’

CHAPTER II.

CHESHAM PLACE.

‘Like a storm he came
And shook the house, and like a storm he went.’

TRISTRAM LUSHINGTON ‘went down’ the next day. He arrived at the railway-station in a hansom five minutes before the train started. He brought no luggage with him but a portmanteau, which was thrown up on the top of the cab. He had left all his ‘things’ behind at his rooms, to be packed by professional packers and sent after him.

As he strolled down the long Cambridge platform, which was crowded with men ‘going down,’ he saw Harold Beech superintending the transfer of a particularly shabby box into the luggage van.

He was so concerned about that box that he had no eyes for anything else.

‘I was afraid the bottom would come out,’ he explained, when Tristram tapped him on the shoulder. ‘All my books are in that box ; I wouldn’t have anything happen to it for the world.’

He went up to town in a third-class carriage adjoining the luggage van, that he might be near that box, and Tristram jumped in beside him.

‘You’ve made a mistake, sir,’ the porter said, when he took Tristram’s first-class ticket, just before the train started.

‘Oh no, I’ve made no mistake,’ he said cheerfully. He wasn’t thinking about the ticket ; he was thinking of that other matter he had been talking to Harold Beech about the night before.

He had suddenly remembered that he had started in life with a first-class ticket for the whole of the journey, and that he had voluntarily thrown it up, and cast in his lot with the poor, despised third-class—with Beech and his books.

They parted at Liverpool Street : Harold Beech in a four-wheeler, with the shabby box between his knees, to a lodging in Bloomsbury, and Lushington in the paternal carriage for Belgravia.

He had left Cambridge so early in the day that he reached Chesham Place in time for luncheon. Sir Tristram was in the morning-room when his son arrived ; he was reading the *Times* in a wide easy-chair under a big window, and he looked up when Tristram came in.

‘How d’ye do, Trim?’ he said, nodding over the top of his paper, and holding out two or three fingers to his firstborn.

He was a big, rather handsome man, very well fed and nurtured generally, and more aristocratic-looking than his son. He had iron-gray hair, beautifully cut, and a gray moustache, and a beard with a good deal of white in it—rather a long beard for the present fashion, but beautifully trimmed. He had a red, full face and dark eyes, full, too, like his cheeks, and his figure had a

corresponding fulness. He wore a black morning-coat and light waistcoat and trousers, and they were beautifully cut, and he had a flower in his button-hole. He looked exactly like a country squire, a magistrate, a member for the county, a descendant of a long, long line of baronets.

He was all these things—all but the last.

The room was a beautiful room; it looked as if it had belonged to an old, old family. Everything in it had the appearance of age—of having been handed down for generations. The portraits by Old Masters on the walls, the beautiful crewel-embroidered hangings to the windows, the Chipendale furniture, the old china and bronzes and enamels, all denoted the accumulated heirlooms of an ancient family.

There were no gimcrackeries here, nothing modern or frivolous. Everything was in the best possible taste; there was not a flaw anywhere.

‘Lady Cornelia will be in presently,’ the Baronet

said, when he had greeted his son ; ‘ she will be in to lunch.’

Lady Cornelia was Tristram’s mother, a daughter of the Earl of Sark, and he was said to have inherited his pale, clear-cut features from her.

He was distinctly unlike his father, as he stood before him in the clear June sunlight, with his lips twitching nervously, and a cold dew breaking out on his forehead. He had inherited nothing from him but—but a million of money, and he was going to renounce that. He was going to get it over before lunch.

Sir Tristram couldn’t think why his son was standing there in that ridiculous attitude, shifting himself uneasily from one leg to the other, with his lips quivering and that sickly pallor on his face. He jumped at once to the conclusion that most men would have jumped at under the circumstances. Tristram had got into trouble, money trouble, and he was going to make a clean breast of it.

There was going to be a *mauvais quart d’heure*,

and then it would be all over. It was only a question of money. When there was so much to fall back upon, a few thousands more or less didn't matter. A stroke of the pen would put things right in a moment.

These pleasing reflections passed through the Baronet's mind as he glanced at his firstborn over the columns of the *Times*, but he did not make the confession that was coming any easier. He only looked at his watch, and remarked that Lady Cornelia was late for lunch.

The luncheon was spread in the adjoining room. The heavy embroidered hangings that separated the morning-room, where Sir Tristram was reading the *Times*, from the dining-room beyond were drawn aside. It was quite a lordly room, and the big dining-table was spread for a lordly meal. A dozen people might have been coming to partake of the luncheon that was spread, instead of three. The table shimmered in the June sunshine with silver and frosted glass, and there was a faint,

delicious perfume of flowers, an indescribable air of *bien-être* about the place that appealed to Tristram, as he stood there, with a strange sinking at his heart, as it had never appealed to him before.

He had been used to these things all his life. He had grown up amid these surroundings. They had never appealed to him before, but they had a new attraction for him to-day.

‘I have got something to say to you, sir,’ he said, moistening his dry lips, and with that terrible sinking at his heart that he could not understand. ‘I should like to say it before Lady Cornelia comes in.’

‘Whatever you have to say, I hope you will get it over before lunch. I have an appointment at two o’clock. Have you got into a scrape, Trim?’

He took it so easily, this trouble of his son’s; he spoke quite in an airy tone of that ‘scrape’ that he had made up his mind Tristram had got himself into.

‘No, sir, I have not got into a scrape ; it is something more serious. I—I have——’

It was very hard to get it out.

‘Something more serious? Egad ! you haven’t had a flare-up with Mary Gascoigne? Nothing wrong in that direction, I hope?’

‘It has nothing to do with Mary Gascoigne; at least, my decision has nothing to do with Mary. I am going to give up the brewery, sir, that is all.’

‘Going to do what?’ thundered the Baronet. He didn’t shout, he thundered. Parkyn, the footman, who was coming in with a letter on a silver tray, almost jumped the letter off the tray into the Baronet’s lap, and he shook a cloud of powder out of his hair.

‘I am going to give up my share in the brewery, sir. I cannot reconcile it to my conscience as a Christian to engage in a traffic that is bringing misery to thousands of my fellow-creatures.’

The Baronet dropped the paper he was reading,

and he threw back his head with an involuntary gesture of scorn.

‘Good Lord!’ he exclaimed, in a voice that thrilled through the poor trembling fellow before him. ‘He can’t reconcile it to his conscience!’

‘I have had it on my mind to tell you for a long time,’ Tristram went on, speaking rapidly, and not seeming to notice the interruption. ‘If I hadn’t been a coward I should have told you years ago. I should never have touched a penny of these ill-gotten gains. I will never touch another penny so long as I live. I am sorry to disappoint you, sir; but I desire to give up from this time my connection with the brewery.’

The Baronet had dropped the *Times*, and his hands were grasping the knees of his beautifully fitting trousers, and he was looking at his son—his firstborn—with an air of amusement, in which scorn and ridicule were equally blended.

‘Humph!’ he remarked in a tone that made the poor white-faced fellow blush like a girl.

‘You have no sympathy with my motives, sir. You do not see with me,’ the poor fellow blurted out, hanging his head, and looking a sorry spectacle for the leader of a New Crusade.

‘I certainly have no sympathy with your motives,’ Sir Tristram said bluntly, in a dry, hard voice that did not belie his words. ‘The brewery has been good enough for me, and for my father before me, for three generations of Lushingtons. The money that the brewery has brought in, and it has brought in a good deal in its time, has been well spent. It has not been selfishly hoarded or squandered upon selfish gratifications. It has been distributed, as few rapidly-built fortunes have been distributed, in works of usefulness and philanthropy. The Lushingtons have headed every public subscription list for years past. Their liberality in some cases, in most cases, has been princely. There is no good work, no work of far-reaching philanthropy or Christian usefulness, that has been set afoot during the last fifty years but

the Lushingtons have taken a prominent part in it. A tithe, a considerable deal more than a tithe, of the profits of the brewery, that you speak so disparagingly of, has been set apart for years past for philanthropic purposes. Go down into the East End and see what the brewery has done for the people there. Ask who built that row of lodging-houses that are matchless in all Europe for their accommodation and the perfection of their sanitary arrangements, and you will be told Lushingtons. Ask who built and endowed that great institute, with its libraries and reading-rooms, its great hall for lectures and concerts, its classes for instruction, its gymnasium and grounds for outdoor games and recreation, the People's Institute, as it is well called, and you will be told Lushingtons. Ask who built the almshouses, where one hundred poor men and women are comfortably housed, and fed, and clothed, where all the wants of their age are anticipated and provided for, and you will be told Lushingtons. Ask

who supports the local charities, the soup kitchen, the coffee palace, the clothing clubs, the coal, the blanket, the provident sick societies, the night schools, the infirmary, and you will get the same answer. And in the face of all this benevolent work that the brewery is carrying on at its own cost, and out of its own legitimate profits, you talk of your conscience not permitting you to share in its ill-gotten gains !'

The son of the house that had done such great things, that was doing such great things, looked very red and uncomfortable as he stood crestfallen and in a most unheroic attitude while Sir Tristram condescended to make this explanation, not defence. Oh dear no, not defence !

If the truth must be told, Tristram Lushington had no idea that the great house with which he had the honour of being connected had done all these things—had done half these things. He had a vague idea that it was grinding the faces of the poor ; that it was taking all, everything, and giving

nothing. It was quite a new thing to learn that it had made this use of the great wealth it was accumulating year by year. It almost justified its existence. The end almost justified the means. Still, the question of the morality of making beer had not been solved.

Tristram was silenced for the moment, but he was not convinced.

‘I did not know that the brewery was doing all this, sir,’ he said presently, feeling just a little small.

He had only now begun to realize that his complaint against the great house had been a tacit charge against his father with living upon ill-gotten gains. Whether ill-gotten or not, he certainly flourished upon them—they agreed with him exceedingly; he had never looked so prosperous and portly as he did now, posing as a philanthropist, the great benefactor of the East End.

Lady Cornelia came in while Tristram was

stammering his excuses, and then he had to kiss his mother and sit down to lunch, which was already half an hour late. The servants were coming in and out of the room all through the meal, and Sir Tristram talked about the debate in the House the night before, and the division, and the pass that the country was coming to.

He was a Tory of the old, old school, and he brewed Conservative beer. He had no patience with the Radical notions of the present day. He wouldn't have sent his son to Cambridge for the world, if he had dreamt that he would be led away by these so-called advanced thinkers. The knowledge had fallen upon him like a bomb, but it had not interfered with his appetite. No one, to have seen him looking at the wine in his glass with the approving eye of a connoisseur, and despatching with equal relish that *pâté-de-foie-gras*, would have surmised that the interview with his son had been a disquieting one.

Tristram was made of different stuff. He had

no appetite for the meal, and he refused everything but water. He was conscious of an irritating feeling of something akin to shame; he was not at all sure that he had not been over-hasty in taking that oath.

CHAPTER III.

LUSHINGTON'S ENTIRE.

‘What know we of the secret of a man ?
His nerves were wrong.’

It was Lady Cornelia's custom to have a nap after lunch—not a long nap, a mere ‘forty winks’—and then to rise refreshed and take her afternoon drive.

To-day, this beautiful June day that brought her son back to her released from his academical pursuits, and invested with a degree in Arts, she departed from her custom, and did not indulge in a single ‘wink.’ Something had disturbed her usual serenity, and sleep would not have come to her, however tightly she had closed her eyelids.

She did not look the least like closing them as she sat, very upright, on a beautiful Louis-Seize chair, fanning herself vigorously with a feather fan. It was a warm June day, and her ladyship felt the heat. She was a handsome, well-preserved woman of uncertain age, with a fine figure and a remarkable complexion. She had been a beauty in her time, and she still retained her waxen complexion and her abundant fair hair. It was abundant still, and a pale yellow, not straw, with a touch of gold in it. Especially the big, handsome plait, that she wore well forward, under a tiny cap of dainty lace, was particularly golden.

Fair women proverbially wear well, and Lady Cornelia had worn remarkably well. She had never had a single care in her life. Nothing had ever happened to cause a wrinkle to mar the smooth surface of her polished brow, to gather horrid little crows'-feet round the corners of her pale blue eyes. She had a fine aristocratic profile, a high, narrow forehead, a well-cut, thin-lipped

mouth, and a most distinguished nose—a Roman nose of dainty proportions, that had descended to her from a long line of earls—Earls of Sark. She had also inherited from this noble race her pale blue eyes. There was only one fault about her eyes: they were small.

Perhaps from looking at the world, the every-day world, from such an immense distance, her eyes had contracted.

Tristram had inherited from his mother her high, narrow forehead, and her pale, clear-cut face, and her abundant fair hair—he wore it long, and it curled over the collar of his coat, and over his narrow forehead, like a poet—but he had not inherited her eyes. He had gone back a generation or two, to some very ancient Earls of Sark, for his thoughtful, melancholy gray eyes. They were dreamy eyes, too, and the young man was always losing himself in day-dreams. He sometimes at college lectures had fits of abstraction, and sat open-mouthed throughout the lecture, with his

notebook open before him, without taking a single note, and when he got up with the rest and went out, he would not be able to tell, for the life of him, what the lecturer had been talking about,

He was dreaming now, as he sat in the drawing-room at Chesham Place, opposite Lady Cornelia. He had not heard anything her ladyship had been saying for the last ten minutes.

‘It would be flying in the face of the world,’ her ladyship said sharply.

Something in her voice, or in the words, aroused him, and he looked up with a sudden light in his dreamy eyes.

‘Yes,’ he said eagerly; ‘that is just what it would be. It would be flying in the face of the world. Instead of being content to swim with the stream, it would be driving in the very teeth of public opinion. Instead of answering the world according to its idols—wealth, fame, success, luxury, self-indulgence—it would be smiting them in the face. It would be giving up all, everything.

It would be following the example of the saints of old, who gave up lands and ease, and father and mother, and counted all things but dross, in comparison with obedience to the command of their Master !'

Lady Cornelia shivered.

'I cannot think where you have got these dreadful notions,' she said. 'I am sure you ought to see Dr. Busby ; you have been working too hard, Trim. You must go abroad, and travel till the spring ; there is nothing like going abroad for the nerves. I would go with you if it were not in the middle of the season. Geraldine has to be brought out. She has improved so much, Trim, lately ; she is expected to make quite a sensation.'

Then Tristram remembered that he had not seen his sister. There was only one Miss Lushington, and she was five years younger than he. There was a brother between them, Cecil, whose coming of age had recently been celebrated with much pomp and rejoicing.

‘I had forgotten Dene,’ he said; ‘where is she? Why isn’t she here?’

‘Here! She is not to be introduced till the next Drawing-room. She is at Garlands until she comes up to be presented. She must not be seen until she comes out.’

‘Why not?’ he asked stupidly.

‘Why not! It would do away with the surprise and the expectation if she were seen every day. It will be the event of the season. Everybody is talking about it. Rumours have got afloat that she is a lovely brunette, that she will put all the other débutantes in the shade.’

Lady Cornelia was so full of her daughter’s coming success that she had forgotten all about Tristram’s tiresome quixotic notions.

‘I don’t see the use of shutting her up,’ he said moodily. ‘A girl like Dene does not need to be brought out like a show. I wish you would take a higher view of things, mamma.’

Her ladyship fanned herself and drew her eye-

lids together. She had a habit of contracting her eyelids if things did not please her, and that made her blue eyes look smaller than ever.

‘You don’t understand these things, Trim, and your nerves are shaken. I’m sure no time should be lost in your seeing Dr. Busby.’

Then Lady Cornelia went out for her drive, and told all the dear friends she met at the Belgravian tea-tables that she honoured with her presence, that her eldest son had just returned from Cambridge with his nerves quite shattered with the severe strain of the examination he had emerged from with such distinction and honour.

Dr. Busby really did call the next morning to see Tristram. He quite took her ladyship’s view of the case. He detected unmistakable signs of cerebral excitement and over-work, and prescribed rest and change. Thorough change: theatres, concerts, dances, life—Life spelt with a big ‘L’—a whirl of gaiety and amusement, constant occupation, to keep the mind from dwelling on its morbid notions.

Tristram consented to try the prescription for a week—at least, he did not say a word about giving up the brewery for a whole week—and he went into society.

He was not quite sure that he had not been a little hasty in taking that oath that he had locked away at the bottom of his desk. He was naturally weak and excitable, and easily led away by his emotions, and he had not considered this matter calmly before he had committed himself by that rash oath.

Was he really bound to keep it? Would it be well to reconsider it?

There was something of self-abasement in the way he submitted to himself that he had been hasty, that perhaps, after all, he was wrong—he was throwing away a great opportunity for good.

Think what a million of money could do! Who ever heard of a philanthropist throwing away a million of money?

Perhaps Sir Tristram was right, after all. The

brewery was doing a great work for the people. It was the centre of a vast system of beneficence. He inspected the private cash-book of the firm during that week, and was surprised to see the large sums that were devoted yearly to works of public usefulness and private charity. It supported an orphanage, endowed schools, provided for the old age, for the needs and infirmities, of its great army of employés. If it were to stop its beneficent work a single day it would cause widespread ruin and dismay.

Perhaps it was this thought that made Tristram pause—pause and consider. He was so anxious to do right. He would have liked to go on tilting at windmills, but perhaps, after all, this was not the kind of knight-errantry he was called upon to perform.

He found an opportunity during that week in town to go over the brewery. He would see it for himself. He went over it with Cecil, who had come up for a day or two from Oxford.

The foreman received the two young men, and went over the place with them. 'Master Cecil,' he remarked, when the visit was over and the brothers had gone away, 'looked more like a brewer than the other. He didn't turn green and yaller at the smell of the beer, like the other chap; not he!'

The man was right in his estimate. Cecil looked every inch a brewer—a ruddy, well-favoured, clean-shaven young man, square about the shoulders and square about the head, particularly square about the jaw, but disappointing about the eyes. He bore a striking resemblance to Sir Tristram in his manly figure and his fresh-coloured face, but he 'favoured' her ladyship about the eyes.

The brothers went through the place quietly; they did not hurry over it. Tristram wanted to see it for the first and, perhaps, the last time. He wanted to see how this wealth grew. They went first into a great hall full of vats—Tristram had

never seen anything like them : he looked like a pigmy standing beside them ; he never remembered to have felt so small—and then upstairs into a floor above, a floor with iron bars to walk upon, where they could look down and see the liquor seething and fermenting beneath.

The smell of the place made Tristram sick. He turned green and yellow and all sorts of unpleasant colours as he climbed the stairs and wandered in and out among the great vats. The very smell of the place made him drunk.

He was not one of the old sort at all. His grandfather used to work in this place with the men. He used to spend his days, sometimes his nights, here. He discovered, he created, that wonderful Double X that made the fortunes of the house. He was not above wearing a leather apron and working with the men. There were some old men there still who remembered him, and they looked up stupidly as Tristram with his chalky face went by, and shook their heads and muttered to themselves,

‘A poor sort o’ chap that; not one of the old sort at all.’

They saw everything while they were about it—the crushing of the malt, the storing of the hops, the working and fermenting of the beer, the storing of the barrels when the process was complete, the vast wilderness of cellars that held thousands and thousands of barrels.

‘By Jove, it’s a fine place!’ Cecil remarked more than once, as he ran up and down those stairs and looked between the iron bars of the flooring at the great vats of liquor fermenting below. There was one vat that quite won his heart, a big-bellied vat that held four thousand barrels. He sniffed at the steam that uprose from this monster with evident relish, and watched with a loving eye the slow heaving of the surface, and the upheaved masses of malt turning lazily over, while Tristram—Tristram was far too sick and giddy to trust himself near that horrible steam.

The foreman was quite right—Cecil was a born

brewer. If Tristram gave up this place his brother was quite ready to step into his shoes.

‘It’s a jolly place,’ Cecil remarked, when they stepped out again into the sunshine; ‘it’s an awfully jolly place. Why, what ails you, Trim?’

He might well ask the question. Tristram had staggered against an iron railing; the smell of the beer, that had made him sick in the close atmosphere of the brewery, made him faint when he came out into the open air. If it hadn’t been for that convenient iron railing he would have fallen on the kerb.

‘It is that horrible fusel-oil,’ he murmured with a shudder.

It was not altogether the fusel-oil which caused that deadly sickness when he came out into the air; it was the remembrance of those barrels. He had not asked, he would rather not have known, how many thousands of barrels were stored away in those vast cellars, how many gallons of beer were

fermenting in those monster vats, how much beer would be made from the malt and hops he saw stored away in those endless warehouses. He shuddered to think of it. He only remembered that every barrel might be the price of a soul, perhaps of a hundred souls !

CHAPTER IV.

GARLANDS.

‘A land of hops and poppy-mingled corn.’

TRISTRAM went down to Garlands the next day. He was sick of town already, and he was haunted with the smell of the brewery. He couldn’t get away from the smell of the beer. London reeked of it. He couldn’t cross a road, or turn the corner of a street, or take a stroll in the Park, without encountering beer, beer, beer at every step.

An elderly man had fallen off a seat in the Park the morning he came away, and was lying on the ground breathing heavily when Tristram came across him, and called the attention of a policeman to him. It looked like a case of apoplexy as the

man lay on the grass with his distorted purple face turned up to the sweet June sky, and his laboured breath coming short and thick. The policeman turned him over with his foot, as he would have turned a dog over.

‘Beer, sir, beer; he’s had too much beer, an’ the heat’s overpowered him.’

A drunken woman with a child in her arms was knocked down by a hansom the evening before, as he was crossing the road, and he saw the miserable wretch dragged from beneath the wheels, and heard the frightened cry of the little child. He couldn’t get the cry out of his ears. He couldn’t get away from the faint sickly odour of the beer; it greeted him at every street corner. The doors of the beer-shops seemed to fly open as he passed and belch forth beer, beer, beer!

Tristram couldn’t bear it any longer, so he packed his portmanteau and went down to Garlands. It was a four hours’ journey by a fast Great Western express to that distant Devonshire

village ; the smell of beer surely could not follow him there !

Nobody was expecting him, and he had to hire a fly from the railway hotel to take him up to the house. The landlord was in his bar, among his taps, and the place reeked of beer ; the ostler who brought the fly round brought a distinct aroma of beer round with it ; and the driver came out of the yard wiping his mouth.

He couldn't get away from beer even here.

In the lovely close of the summer day he drove through the sweet green silent country. He had only three miles to drive, through the twisting village street, and along the high-road, with the rich cultivated fields and pleasant meadows on either side, past scattered hamlets clustering round their old gray churches, and picturesque homesteads standing amid cornfields and orchards. Everything was soothing and restful. There was nothing here to jar his nerves and remind him of beer.

Garlands was not an old house ; it was built on

the site of an old house that had been pulled down to make room for it. Nothing of the old place was left but its pleasant suggestive name. Everything had been cleared away, and a new house had arisen from its ashes. It stood on rising ground, with a wooded hill rising steeply behind it: a big white block of building, without any distinctive character in it, but with plenty of windows to reflect the red sunset light; an imposing house, dazzling in its whiteness in the midst of the wide stretch of green country, and with the dark background of pines.

Geraldine Lushington was walking in the park with her governess, and she saw the fly coming up the drive with Tristram in it. She ran across the grass to intercept it, as it turned a corner, in a most unladylike way, shouting 'Trim! Trim!' at the top of her voice.

Tristram saw his sister running, and he stopped the fly and jumped down to meet her.

'Oh, Trim, what has brought you here?' she

panted; she was quite out of breath with running when she came up to him.

She threw her arms around his neck and gave him a sounding kiss of welcome, and they walked arm-in-arm together towards the house.

The brother and sister were strangely unlike; they were cast in quite different moulds. Geraldine was decidedly *petite*, and a brunette—an English brunette, with a clear, delightful complexion that is shown off to advantage by dark hair—that is quite irresistible beneath soft clustering rings of blue-black hair. Her eyes were dark like her hair, not languishing, almond-shaped eyes, but round, honest, wide-opened English eyes, bright and clear, with beautiful dark lashes and eyebrows.

Lady Cornelia was right; she would be quite sure to make a sensation by-and-by. Her face was flushed now with running; she was not usually so red-cheeked—had only a faint suspicion of peach-bloom beneath the pale, clear whiteness of her skin.

Her brother looked at her with pardonable pride; he was not thinking of the 'sensation' she would presently make; he was thinking what a jolly thing it was to have such a dear little sister.

'You are looking splendid, Dene,' he said.

'Oh yes, I'm well enough. I shall do. I'm going to be presented soon. Think! I've got the loveliest gown you ever saw, with a train! You wouldn't be able to walk near me, you'd tumble over it; that's the fun of trains. I've been practising walking in a train for weeks. I wear a sheet, and it drags behind me yards. I used to tumble over it at first, but I can manage it better now. You shall see me practising to-morrow.'

The girl was full of her train and the coming glories of her début. Tristram listened to her listlessly. He was thinking what a waste of enthusiasm it was to spend so much emotion, time, thought, and admiration upon a train—a mere bundle of rags, costly rags: silk, lace, feathers—and drag it in a senseless, ridiculous fashion in the

dust. He was dreadfully in earnest. He had no patience with fashions and customs that were frivolous and senseless. He was always tilting at windmills.

‘You haven’t told me what you came down here for in the middle of the season, Trim,’ the girl asked, as she was pouring out his tea in the school-room; the drawing-room was wrapped up in brown holland, and the blinds were kept down all day for fear of the sunlight fading the carpets. All the reception-rooms were shrouded in holland and darkness; only the old schoolroom, with its shabby, well-worn furniture, and the rooms occupied by Geraldine and her governess, were in habitable condition.

The governess had considerably left the brother and sister together. The June sunset bathed the distant landscape, the village and the church, and the sweet green country, in a blaze of purple and red and gold. It shone upon their faces in this western room as they sat at tea, and made them

glorious. They could scarce look at each other for the shining of their faces.

‘I?’ he said, answering her question—‘I? I have come down here, Dene, to—to get away from the beer.’

‘To get away—from—the—beer?’ she repeated, opening her round eyes very wide.

‘Yes, dear, to get away from the beer. I am going to give up my share in the brewery, Dene. Anyone can have it. I will never touch another penny of it, if I can help it, as long as I live. It will go to swell your portion, yours and Cecil’s. You will be able to buy as many trains as you like with it.’

‘Going to give up the brewery, Trim?’

The colour dropped out of the girl’s cheeks, out of her lips; she looked quite white in the glowing sunset, and her voice shook; she could not keep it steady.

‘Yes, dear, I am giving it up. It is not much to give up. Thank God, it never really belonged to me.’

‘I don’t understand,’ Geraldine said, looking pale and troubled; ‘I can’t think what you mean, Trim. Why do you want to give up the brewery?’

‘I want to give it up, dear, because—because I think it immoral; because it is piling up a great, terrible fortune out of the ruin of thousands of my fellow-creatures.’

‘Im—moral?’ the girl repeated slowly. She could not take it in all at once, the significance of her brother’s words; ‘im—moral? How can it be im—moral, Trim, when—when it has gone on so many years, and it has done so much for us—for others? It provides for hundreds of families, I have heard papa say, and it spends thousands a year in charities. When did you find out it was immoral, Trim?’

‘I have found it out a long time,’ he answered sadly, hanging his head as he spoke; ‘but I had not the courage of my opinions—I was afraid to make a stand, I am so horribly nervous of ridicule;

it is my weakness, Dene. I should have come out before, but I was afraid of what the world would say.'

'You think it wicked, im—moral, to make beer?'

'I think anything that causes a fellow-creature to fall—that lays a net to entrap others—is wicked,' he said warmly. He was always stirred up when he spoke on the subject of temperance, the subject so near his heart.

'And the brewery—the beer—does this?'

'How can you ask, Dene? It is the ruin of thousands. It causes men and women to forget all natural ties; it makes men give up wife and children and home; it makes a woman forget the babe at her breast. I saw one, only yesterday, run over. I saw her dragged out from beneath the horse's feet, drunk and insensible, and I heard the piteous cry of the little child in her arms; I cannot get the cry out of my ears. I saw a man this morning—an old man with gray hair—drunk in the Park. He had fallen off a seat, and lay on the ground

with his face to the sky, drugged and insensible with beer. Good God! it might have been our beer!’

The girl covered her face with her hands. ‘I did not know—I never thought of it being wrong,’ she said with a shudder. ‘I did not know it made people do these dreadful things. I always thought it was such a respectable thing, a big, famous brewery that is known all over the world; and papa is so proud of it!’

‘Yes,’ he said, ‘that is the worst: papa is so proud of it; he cannot see that it is wrong.’

‘Have you spoken to him? Have you told him what you think about it?’

‘I have told him that as a Christian I cannot engage in this dreadful business, seeing it as I see it—a traffic in the souls of my fellow-creatures; I have told him that I will never touch another penny of these ill-gotten gains!’

‘And he—what did he say?’

‘He thought I was quixotic, that my mind had

been upset,' he said bitterly. 'They have sent for a doctor for me, he and mamma; they think I am the victim of delusions—that I am mad, quite mad. I am to go abroad for change; to travel with a keeper for a year, and come back when I have got over my delusions.'

Dene rose from her seat, and came over to him, and put her arms around his neck and her cheek against his.

'Never mind what people say, Trim; they can't send you away against your will. *I* know you are not mad.'

As the brother and sister talked, the sun went down in the crimson west, and the ruddy glow faded from their shining faces and from the darkling room, and the shadows deepened, and still they talked late into the summer night.

Tristram was always sure of sympathy from Geraldine; she understood him better than the others—better than Cecil, who was at Oxford, and who had not been contaminated by these Radical

notions. Cecil was prouder of the great brewery and his connection with it than any of the family. He had no patience with Tristram's scruples. He agreed in the general verdict. After that visit to the brewery he had no hesitation in declaring that his brother was as mad as a hatter.

But it was not for Geraldine's sympathy alone that Tristram had left town in the height of the London season for Garlands. He had another object in view, and they talked it over in the sweet June twilight.

'And you have not told Mary?' Geraldine was saying a little breathlessly.

'No; I shall tell her to-morrow.'

'How will she take it?'

'I don't know how she will take it; it is scarcely possible that she will see with me. She may think me mad, like the rest,' he said bitterly.

'Oh, you must not say that, Trim! Mary is as good as gold. She will be sure to do you justice.

She may not see things as you see them, but she will not think you mad.'

The young man looked up and smiled, and he flushed hotly, like a girl. His complexion was so pale for a man—so pale, or so fair, or both—that, when any sudden colour came into his cheeks, it looked ridiculously like blushing.

'You think there is a chance, then, of her thinking that I am doing right—that she will not give me up—because—because I am acting according to my conscience?'

'I am sure she would not have you do otherwise. Mary is so noble; she would not have you do anything—that—that your conscience would not let you do, for the world! Oh, you don't know Mary, Trim, if you think she would wish you to live and act a lie!'

The rare colour had come into the girl's face, and her eyes were shining, and her red lips were parted in defence of her friend. If Lady Cornelia could have seen her daughter now, she would have said

that her success was assured, that, though the last of the débutantes, she would be the acknowledged beauty of the London season.

The young man sighed.

‘You are sanguine, Dene,’ he said moodily. ‘Mary could not have a better champion. I wish she could hear you now. She may not see things as you see them ; she may think, as everybody else thinks, that it is throwing away a fortune—a fortune, when money is so much needed. She may take quite a different view ; she may think it quixotic, and flying in the face of the world.’

CHAPTER V.

BREDWARDINE.

‘ The splendour falls on castle walls.’

TRISTRAM had an opportunity the following morning of learning from Mary Gascoigne’s own lips what she thought of it. He had come over after breakfast to tell her. It was not far to come. The two estates of Garlands and Bredwardine adjoined, and the houses were not a mile apart.

He had left Dene to her lessons and practising in a sheet how to carry her train. Her thoughts kept wandering all the morning from the pages of the German poet she was vainly trying to master, and she could put no spirit into the train. She dragged it after her in a limp, spiritless way, and once or

twice, when she was walking backwards, she fell over it, and moved her instructress to tears. She would disgrace her, she declared ; she would disgrace everyone in the face of her Britannic Majesty !

Tristram crossed the park into the high-road that skirted the broad demesne of Bredwardine. He could have saved half a mile by going through the shrubbery and the plantation beyond, and over the rustic bridge into the grounds of Bredwardine. The park and ornamental grounds extended over a thousand acres, and reached up to the gates of Garlands. He did not choose to go by the near cut this morning, the short private path that Geraldine used when she paid her frequent informal visits to her friend Mary Gascoigne. He went round by the road and through the great gates up to the front entrance. He was not ashamed of his errand, and he would not go round the back way.

Bredwardine was the finest house in the county

—a beautiful old house, surrounded by beautiful grounds and a noble park. It was a perfect specimen of, so far as it went, a perfect style of architecture. Everything that we have in England that has any claim to architectural beauty dates back to it. There are some earlier buildings, but they are not more beautiful; for they are less complete, and have been patched and added to and restored so often that there is little to tell where the old, the really old, leaves off and the new begins.

There had not been a brick added to Bredwardine since it left the builder's hands in the last years of James I.

An avenue of great breadth, with noble trees, led up from the imposing gate-tower to the house. The trees had been planted when the house was built, and they were now in their prime. In this leafy month of June they were in their richest foliage, with their heads in the sunshine and long cool shadows at their feet.

Between the green of the trees the old masses of

red brick, warmed to a deeper red by the sunshine, glowed in all their picturesque beauty : a huge mass of weather-beaten brickwork, with projecting turrets, and arches, and parapets, and finials, that two hundred and seventy years seemed only to have softened and mellowed into more stately beauty. A clock-tower surmounted the entrance, and to the right and left were projecting wings, with the sunlight flashing back from long rows of windows, and quaint garden banks rising up in terraces on either side.

On the ancient oak door was the date 'Anno Domini 1623,' and within an arch, the keystone of which bore a grotesque figure over the entablature, was a rich compartment bearing the arms and quarterings of the Gascoignes.

The gardens rose on either side the house, terrace upon terrace, with natural arbours formed by ingenious bending of trees and boughs—old, formal gardens, matching the fashion of the house, and ablaze now with flowers.

Tristram took in all these details as he walked slowly up the avenue. He looked at them with a strange feeling of regret. The beauty of the place touched him—the stately beauty and the mellow charm, the soothing, restful quiet of this abode of ancient peace. He could not stifle a sigh as he rang the bell at the hall door. He had often heard that solemn old bell ring out before, but it had a new sound for him to-day—it sounded like a knell.

Mary Gascoigne was at home. He did not ask for Lady Bredwardine; he only asked for Mary. She was in the library. He followed the servant up the great oak staircase, which is one of the features of the house, with its rich carvings and terminal figures, through a stately suite of rooms, with beautiful carved mantelpieces and oak-panelled walls hung with family portraits as old as the house itself.

He knew all these ancestors of the Gascoignes by heart. He had seen them hundreds of times

before, but they seemed to look down upon him to-day with a new look in their painted eyes. The house was full of portraits of dead and gone Gascoignes who had once occupied these stately rooms. There was no space on the walls for anything but portraits.

Mary Gascoigne was in the library. The servant brought Tristram to the door, and murmured his name, and closed the door upon him, leaving him to find the object of his visit. The library of Bredwardine was the most remarkable room in the house—the most remarkable room in the county. It was over a hundred feet in length, and not more than twenty broad, and it had wide deeply-recessed windows on either side, that anyone could be well concealed in. Tristram walked the whole length of the room before he found Mary. There was a crimson carpet in the middle of the polished floor that muffled the sound of his footsteps. He did not trust himself on the shiny shimmery surface of the highly beeswaxed floor on either side that

strip of carpet. He might have made his presence known in a way that would scarcely have been dignified, and that would have ill accorded with the gravity of his errand.

He found her in the last recess at the end of the room. She was buried in the book she was reading, and did not hear him until he stood before her.

‘Mary!’ he cried under his breath.

She looked up quickly with a little cry of surprise, and saw him standing there.

His face was pale and anxious, she saw in that rapid glance, and he was looking at her with troubled eyes.

‘You here, Trim!’ she said, rising from her seat, and coming forward to meet him with outstretched hands, and with a beautiful colour in her cheeks.

He took both her hands in his, and looked down into her upturned face. He did not take her in his arms, as he had a right to do—they were lovers

'long betrothed'—but he held her hands in his, and looked down into her clear eyes.

They were eyes worth looking into. They were beautiful, clear, gray eyes, exactly like the eyes of the beautiful ladies in the pictures on the walls. She might have stepped down from one of those massive gilt frames with a coronet on the top. Her eyes were exactly like the painted eyes of the old Gascoignes, only they were deeper and graver eyes, and absorbed the light; and her hair was not powdered and curled. It was beautiful rich brown hair, with a red light in it. It did not curl; it was not dragged over her forehead in a fringe, nor was it fluffy, surrounding her face like a nimbus. It was smooth brown hair with a wave in it, and, like her eyes, it seemed to absorb the light.

For the rest, to the man who was looking down at her with anxious, troubled eyes, it was the most beautiful face in the world—perhaps that goes without saying, for it was the face of the woman he loved.

Something in his manner startled her, and the colour dropped out of her cheeks as quickly as it had come in.

‘Is—is anything the matter, Tristram?’ she asked, with a just perceptible quiver in her voice.

There is a great deal in voices ; Mary Gascoigne’s voice was rich and full, and it thrilled through the young man, who was standing there, sad and silent, with a wistful, troubled look in his eyes, and with not a word to say for himself. There was an ache in his voice when he found words to answer her :

‘No, dear ; there is nothing the matter—only—only I have something to say to you.’

His answer did not reassure her.

What could he have to say to her that made his face so grave ? She sat down in the seat she had just risen from, and he stood before her, with his hand on the pages of the book she had been reading. It seemed to her afterwards, looking back to this interview, that his heavy hand had been pressed down over the fair open page of her life.

‘Something—to—say—to—me?’ she repeated.

‘Yes, dear; something you *must* hear—that you ought to hear at once. How shall I tell you?’

His face was working strangely, and there was a mist before his eyes. If he had not loved her so well he would not have had that lump in his throat and that foolish mist before his eyes.

She laid her hand on his with that charming frankness that was her especial charm, and with a look in her eyes that was so full of trust and confidence that his heart gave a great bound, and the blood leaped up into his white face. Surely this ought to have made the telling easier.

‘I have found out,’ he said, speaking hurriedly in a hoarse whisper, ‘I ought to have found it out long ago, that—that, feeling as I do, I cannot accept the share that it was always expected I should take in the brewery——’

He paused and looked at her, but she could not understand—she could not see the drift of his words.

‘No,’ she said vaguely; ‘why should you?’

She was only trying to help him out. She did not understand at all what he meant.

‘I have told my father this,’ he went on, speaking with difficulty; that lump in his throat was getting bigger every moment; ‘that I can have nothing to do with the brewery—that I will never touch a penny of—of those ill-gotten gains as long as I live!’

He breathed freer now, when his tale was told, but she did not understand.

‘I do not understand,’ she said, speaking like one in a dream; ‘what does it mean, Tristram?’

‘It means, Mary,’ he said, speaking slowly, in a voice hoarse and ashamed in his throat, ‘it means—that—that I have given up a million of money!’

She did not grasp it even then.

‘A million?’ she repeated breathlessly.

He had not the courage of his opinions; he could not speak out boldly, not even to the woman he loved, and tell her what a noble thing this was that

he was doing. He stood before her with ashen cheeks, hanging his head, as if he were doing some shameful thing.

. He was a champion who was ashamed of his cause.

‘I cannot understand,’ she murmured. ‘Oh, Tristram, what does it mean?’

‘It means, dear,’ he said, and his manliness came back to him as he spoke, ‘that I have voluntarily renounced a fortune—a great fortune that has been built up on the destruction of thousands. I cannot engage in—this—this unholy traffic. I have given it up. I have renounced it for ever. Henceforth I am a poor man. I shall have to earn my living like the rest. I have given up all—everything. I can give it up without a pang, knowing at what cost it is purchased. I can give up everything, Mary, everything—but you!’

She understood him now.

She understood so much—that he stood before her robbed of everything that had before made

him attractive in the eyes of the world—the heir of a great fortune; the owner of a million of money, with a perennial stream of gold flowing in, rolling in, without pause or break at his feet.

He was Midas no longer. He was only a white-faced, commonplace young man with convictions.

He might have joined the Salvation Army, for all she knew. She didn't know whether to be angry with him or not. It was all so new to her, so hard to realize. She only felt in a dull, dazed sort of way that he had chosen between his convictions and her.

She could not answer him; she sat white and frozen, with a strange sinking at her heart. He had had his choice, and he had not chosen her. In those few seconds she felt herself drifting away from him as if an ocean were widening between them.

‘I cannot hope, I cannot expect, Mary,’ he went on, in that faltering, shamefaced way that stirred all the depths of her nature against him, ‘that—

that things can go on between us as they have done. By my own act I have changed everything. I have made myself a poor man; I have given up all—everything. I cannot ask you, Mary, to share my poverty. It is for you to say whether I have done well. It is for you to send me away—or—or—to bid me stay.'

He could not look in her face as he spoke; he could only look beyond her at the beautiful landscape that spread out beneath the window where he was standing. It was a lovely English landscape, with a wide park and stately trees, melting away in the distance to blue misty hills. Every acre, as far as the eye could reach, belonged to the Gascoignes. It was all hers, this girl's at his side, and he—he was a penniless descendant of a London brewer.

She followed the direction of his eyes, and perhaps she followed his thought. What had she, the heiress of the Gascoignes, to do with this ridiculous quixotic young man?

‘You must give me time to think, Tristram,’ she said, removing her hand from his and passing it across her forehead, as if this trying interview had bewildered her. ‘I must speak to mamma. I must tell her what you have done. I think you should see her for yourself, and explain. It has all been so sudden, I—I cannot realize it.’

CHAPTER VI.

LADY BREDWARDINE'S WALK.

‘Tears from the depth of some divine despair.’

TRISTRAM did not leave his errand only half done. He saw Lady Bredwardine before he went away. It was a trying interview. A *mauvais quart d'heure* would hardly describe it. It spread over half an hour, and at the end of that time he went away.

He went away with a stricken face, and he did not go back by the way he came. He took the short-cut through the grounds, and across the rustic bridge into the plantation. When he reached the plantation and was far away from human observation, he flung himself on the ground, at the foot of the great tall solemn fir-trees, with their

beautiful brave heads in the sunshine, and he buried his poor shamed face in the grass.

‘Mary, Mary, Mary!’ he moaned.

He was quite wrong when he said he had counted the cost.

Lady Bredwardine told Mary the result of that interview when Tristram had gone away. She sent for her daughter, and told her that she had dismissed her lover.

‘I could do nothing else,’ she said; ‘if the young man chooses to take up such ridiculous notions, to fly in the face of the world, he could expect nothing else. When he made up his mind to this act of quixotism, he must have quite understood that in giving up a million of money—it is nearer two millions, I believe—he was giving you up.’

Mary sighed.

‘Perhaps he may reconsider it, mamma,’ she said, but she didn’t say it very hopefully.

‘Yes, it is just possible. But a young man of Tristram Lushington’s temperament is hardly

likely to reconsider it. He was always dreamy and emotional, not practical like his younger brother. It will be a fine thing for Cecil; he is not likely to have any conscientious scruples.'

'N—o,' Mary said thoughtfully, but she was not thinking about Cecil.

Lady Bredwardine was not emotional, and she had no sympathy with enthusiasm in any form. She had no sympathy with anyone or anything in particular. All the deeper depths of her nature were frozen up—frozen up or dried up. She had had immense capacities for loving and suffering once, and she had loved and suffered as few women had suffered and loved.

Her husband, to whom she was devotedly attached, had been found dead by her side on a June morning three years ago; and her son, her only son, had been accidentally shot in Africa. He had been brought back six months ago, and buried in the vault of the Gascoignes. She was wearing mourning for him now—heavy crape mourning on

this hot June day. She was buried in crape from head to foot. She was the picture of bereavement, of life-long, undying sorrow, but she had no sympathy to spare for others. She wanted all her sympathy for her own exceptional grief.

With her son she had lost, not exactly all, for this beautiful old family place was hers, and Mary's after her; but the title, and the estates in Scotland, from which the principal revenues of the family were derived, and Bredwardine Castle in Lothian, had gone to a distant branch.

Her income, too, would revert, when she was gone, to the stranger who had stepped into her son's and her husband's place. There would be nothing left for Mary to keep up this great house with. She would have to go away and shut it up. She would be unable to keep it up a single day.

If all had gone well, and Mary had married the son of the rich London brewer, with his million of money, and all that perennial stream of wealth flowing in, the former glories of the house would

have been restored ; the loss of the wide acres and the place in Scotland would not have been felt.

This was all over now ; the young man had knocked over all these airy castles with his own hand. It was out of the question to think that Mary could marry him when he had renounced that million of money.

‘I think you must write to him, Mary,’ her ladyship said, ‘and tell him that the engagement is at an end. He cannot complain. He has left you no alternative.’

‘He could not expect me to marry him, mamma, if he does this’— she was going to say ‘this noble thing,’ but she paused, and the colour crept up into her face—‘this thing,’ she said meekly. ‘He has had to choose between me and his conscience—and I think he has chosen well.’

Then Mary sat down and wrote her letter. Her ladyship never knew what it cost her to write it. There was no nonsense about Mary Gascoigne ; she knew that she could not marry a poor man.

She gave up her lover without a moan, because he had voluntarily given up that which had made the match desirable. He had chosen well, she told herself; she would not have had him choose differently for the world.

Tristram went back to town the same day. He did not wait for Mary's letter; his interview with Lady Bredwardine had decided his fate. He knew it before he walked up that wide avenue in the sunshine, with the branches waving overhead, and a lark singing a great way up a strange sweet song, as if he knew all about it and were sorry for him. There was a lark singing somewhere in the blue when he came out after the interview was over, but she had changed her tune, and the sweetness had gone out of her song.

Dene knew exactly what the result of his errand had been, when he drove away from Garlands, with his white stricken face, and something that looked suspiciously like tears in his eyes. He was such a weak, emotional fellow; he couldn't put on a brave

face like some men. He wore his heart on his sleeve for all the world to laugh at.

Dene was angry with Mary, angry and indignant when she saw her brother drive away. She did not know what she expected. She thought Mary ought to have shown some sympathy with his project. It was quite dreadful of her to let him go away as he had gone, with that miserable knowledge that she had only loved him for his money. They had been near neighbours, friends, children brought up together all their lives, betrothed lovers for a year, and all this time it was that million of money that had won Mary's heart, not the sweet, noble, unselfish nature that had grown up by her side.

Dene went over to Bredwardine to see Mary when he was gone. Her governess would not hear of her going out in the sun until the heat of the day was past. It was of the greatest importance now that her complexion should not suffer.

She made up for the delay by running all the way as soon as she was out of sight of the many

windows of the house, and arrived at the Hall flushed and panting like a dairymaid.

She came upon the stately old place that Tristram had given up, when he gave up everything else for the sake of his conscience, at exactly the right moment to see it at its best. The beautiful old red pile was warmed to a deeper red by the sunset, and the light flashed back from the long rows of windows, and the sloping lawns and the terraced gardens were flecked with broad patches of light and shade.

She ought to have understood then, if she had not understood before, how impossible it was for Mary Gascoigne to have done other than she had done. If she had not been a Gascoigne it would have been different; but with the burden of all this greatness she had no alternative. Tristram with his own hands had cut the knot. Surely it was her brother who was to blame, not Mary.

Something of this passed through Geraldine's mind as she ran up the steps of the terrace and

burst into the room where Mary was sitting. Her face, always serious, had a deeper earnestness to-night, and there were tears in her eyes, and traces of tears on her cheeks. The writing of that letter had not been easy to her.

‘Oh, Mary, why did you send him away?’ Dene cried; and then she flung herself into the other’s arms.

‘I did not send him away,’ Mary Gascoigne said with some dignity; ‘he gave me up. He chose between me and his conscience, and—and I think he has chosen well.’

And then her dignity gave way, and the tears crowded into her eyes, and she hid her face on Dene’s shoulder. She did not seek to justify herself. She had no alternative; she had done the only thing that remained for her to do; but she thought her lover had done right. The more she thought of it, the more she was convinced that, feeling as he did, she would not have had him do differently for the world.

‘It was like the heroes of old,’ she told herself—
‘the only truly great, who gave up everything,
love, life, everything they held dear—the world’s
favour, the soft voices of praise, success, comfort,
ease; who had flung all these things to the four
winds, and chosen the thorny path of persecution
and poverty. It was like going back to the old,
noble days.’

Mary Gascoigne’s face glowed as she spoke of
what her lover was doing. She was ready to
defend him against all the world.

‘I am not going to send his likeness back, Dene,’
she whispered. It seemed such a sacred thing to
speak of her love to this child. ‘Other girls send
things back when—when it is all over; but I am
not like other girls. It is different with me. I
have known him all his life. We played together
before you were born, Dene. I remember your
being brought into the room in someone’s arms,
and we looked at you together. We wondered at
your little feet and your hands—your tiny hands

that Tristram folded together as if you were saying your prayers. We used to say our prayers often together in those days, and Trim would wrap something white around him and preach. He could preach by the hour even then. I am sure he will make a great preacher; he will move all hearts. He used to make me cry, and I did not know what he meant. I shall keep his picture always by my side to remind me that there is something loftier and deeper and nobler—oh, so much nobler—than mere happiness.'

'You feel all this, Mary, and yet you can give him up?' Dene said reproachfully.

'That is not it,' Mary said eagerly, with a look of beautiful, generous enthusiasm in her wet eyes. 'He could never have been happy here, with all this in his heart; he could never have gone on in the old lines; he has chosen well—his choice has nothing to do with me. Remember, it was his choice, not mine.'

'But he gave you a choice.'

‘Yes; he gave me a choice, but it was not possible to me. I had not myself to consider. There was my mother; she has no one left but me. I must always think of her first.’

‘Y—e—s,’ Dene said doubtfully. She was not at all sure that if it had been *her* lover she should have thought of Lady Cornelia.

‘This has upset her a good deal. It came upon her so suddenly, and she is so easily shaken. It has upset her more than anything that has happened since—since Howard—— Hark! She is pacing the room again, as she used to pace it for weeks after he was brought back. Always, day after day, at sunset, she used to walk up and down that room till she was tired out. He was killed at sunset.’

Dene listened. In the stillness of the silent house she heard the soft, regular footfall on the oak floor of the adjoining room, and every now and then she heard a faint sighing sound like a moan. She would not have noticed it if she had not been listening.

Mary drew aside a heavy curtain that separated this room of hers from her mother's sitting-room. It was like all the rooms in that great house—a large, many-windowed room, a chill, stately, magnificent apartment that did not suggest homeliness or comfort. The furniture was arranged in the stiff, old-fashioned way, and there was no womanly litter about to suggest gossip and feminine occupation. At the farther end of the long, bare room Dene saw Lady Bredwardine, a sad, black-robed figure, trailing her sable draperies behind her as she paced the oak floor, and sometimes uttering a low moan. She did not always know when she moaned. She did not take any notice of the girls; she did not take any notice of outside things when these gloomy fits were upon her. Mary let the curtain fall; but all through their low-toned talk, while the sun was sinking slowly in the west, they heard the footsteps coming and going in the adjoining room.

CHAPTER VII.

ST. NEOT'S MISSION.

‘ We have but faith : we cannot know.’

TRISTRAM did not go back to Chesham Place when he left Garlands. He had an idea that his father's house would no longer be the sort of home for him with his present intentions. He knew exactly what sort of reception awaited him there. Sir Tristram would treat the subject that was so very, very near his heart in his fine ironical vein ; he would not condescend to discuss it, and her ladyship would say that he was mad, and call in the family physician.

Knowing all this, Tristram got into a hansom at Paddington and gave the driver an address in a

thickly-populated and unsavoury slum in the East End.

It was the address of his college mission—a large, barrack-looking building in a dreadfully shabby street. It was not only shabby, but squalid ; a hopelessly unlovely place on this sultry June evening. Tristram paid the man, and stood on the steps of the mission house, looking round at the new strange surroundings of this ‘settlement,’ wherein he had elected to take up his quarters.

It had been a hot June day, hot and breathless in the sweet green country, but close and stifling here, among these crowded London courts. The air was full of strange noises : street cries, costermongers bawling, women quarrelling, children screaming, and the continuous noise of passing footsteps and the roll of wheels.

The discordant sounds and the close, stifling air smote upon him as he stood there, on the threshold of this new life. He turned away, giddy and sick ; perhaps he was only faint for want of food ; he had

not remembered to eat anything since the early morning. A vision of Mary Gascoigne and the wide, cool greenness of Bredwardine had risen up before him as he stood there in the oppressive breathless heat with those strange noises in his ears.

The missionary, an old college friend, received him with open arms. If he had been of any other nationality, and not a cold-blooded Englishman, he would have embraced him ; he would have thrown himself into his arms and saluted him on both cheeks. He very nearly did it as it was ; he was so glad to see him. He took both his hands and held them in his strong, welcoming grip.

‘Dear old fellow ! God has sent you to us in our need. I have been asking Him all day to send someone—and He has sent you.’

And then Jayne (the missionary of St. Neot’s settlement was called Jayne—he is not quite a new friend) noticed that Tristram was looking pale and tired, and he thrust him into the only easy-chair in

the place, and limped off to see about getting him some refreshment.

The sound of the dear fellow's voice, and the pressure of his hands, and the well-remembered limp—poor Jayne had not lost his old infirmity—did more to reconcile Tristram to his new surroundings than a hundred homilies. He was quite sure he was in his right place here, with Jayne—dear old Jayne—as his leader.

He poured out his tea and cut a plate of bread-and-butter, and ministered to all his wants as if he had been a woman. While Tristram drank his tea, Jayne told him all about the mission—who was working here, and who had gone away. A good many had gone away this hot June weather ; some had not been able to stand the heat, the heat and the bad air ; the drainage had not been particularly good, and fever had broken out in some of the crowded courts, and the workers had succumbed one by one, and gone away to recruit, and Jayne was left alone.

Tristram could not have come at a better time.

Clearly, as Jayne said, it was 'a direct answer to prayer.' He, dear simple fellow, was always tracing a kind leading Hand in all the events of life; he was always discovering miraculous answers to prayer.

The mission was not quite so flourishing now as in its early days, and the zeal of the men of St. Neot's had slackened. There were only three or four workers now, even at the best of times, where there used to be a dozen, and now, in this sultry June weather, with all this sickness about, Jayne was here alone.

The mission had been begun several years ago by some men of St. Neot's, a little band of enthusiasts who had pledged themselves to do something for their Master in this place. Everybody called them enthusiasts. Enthusiasm is such an easy name; it fits every work that is unusual, that is fraught with difficulty, that is open to ridicule. It is a moral force in the world, nevertheless; it is perhaps the greatest force in the world; it has removed mountains.

Nobody but enthusiasts would have come to this dreadful slum, and cared for its seething population. Nobody but enthusiasts would have taken a railway arch and rigged it up as a mission-hall, and worked here night after night, summer and winter, fighting the demons of drink and indifference. The railway arch was a thing of the past now. A big ungainly building had taken its place, a great barn-like structure that would hold one or two thousand people. The little band of enthusiasts who had worked side by side in the railway-arch was dispersed now. Some had gone into the foreign mission-field, and some were working elsewhere. All were scattered—the willing hands and the warm young hearts.

As the difficulties disappeared, the fiery zeal that had distinguished the workers seemed to have cooled. Persecution had done more for the mission than prosperity. It had kept the little band together, working shoulder by shoulder, in the teeth of fierce opposition, difficulties that seemed

at the time insurmountable, and raillery that cut them to the quick. It had loosened the purse-strings of their friends, and called forth a new power to help them in their work—sympathy. The outcome of all this was the big mission-hall.

Somehow, when the hall was built the enthusiasm cooled. The old band of workers had dispersed, and people were content to rest and think they had done enough. There never was a time when help was more needed than on that sultry June night when Tristram stood beside his portmanteau on the steps of the settlement.

Perhaps Jayne was right. It really looked like a direct answer to prayer.

Jayne would not hear of Tristram beginning work on the night of his arrival, though he was in a feverish hurry to begin. He limped off alone to take the meeting in the big hall; he had been visiting all day in close, crowded courts, and he had sat up all the night before with a man who was

down with the fever, one of the willing helpers in building that mission-room, but he went off alone to the meeting. He would not hear of Tristram doing anything that first night. He saw how tired and worn the poor fellow looked; he didn't know what he had gone through that day, nor what this effort was costing him. It hadn't cost Jayne anything. No other life had ever seemed possible to him than a life of self-dedication. He could not conceive any other reason for being born into the world if it were not to help other people. We are not all cast in the same mould.

While Jayne went off to his meeting, Tristram had time to look about him and to write a letter that he had had on his mind all through the journey—a letter to his father. He looked about him first. There was not much to see. A bare, shabby, barrack-like building, with dormitories above, and a common sitting-room beneath, where business was discussed and plans were arranged, and a refectory or dining-room behind. It was all

bare—uncarpeted, and unlovely. It was exactly the place for an ascetic who had given up the world, and had no hankerings after art, literature, and the higher culture.

These things were not represented at the settlement. The only attempt at decoration was a large number of texts on the walls, as if the anchorites required a good deal of reminding. There were few books about or on the shelves, but there was a prodigious number of tracts and leaflets and illustrated periodicals bearing on the special subjects of the mission. The men who worked here had given up the gentle life, with its aims and pursuits. They had renounced, for the time at least, pleasures of every kind, and they had thrown themselves heart and soul into 'the work.'

There is one thing to be said for it: it is an imitative life. It may fall far short of the standard: it only acknowledges One standard.

It was exactly the life to suit Tristram, he told himself, as he sat down at the bare table in the dull,

unlovely room to write that letter to his father. He was twenty-three, the heir of an enormous fortune, and he sat down at the bare deal table, in the hush of the soft sweet June night, and renounced, absolutely and for ever, the world and all its delights—and he gave up a million of money.

He had quite made up his mind now; he had chosen his lot. He wanted to put it quite out of his power to go back if he should fall so low as to desire it. He couldn't put any enthusiasm into his letter. He wrote it in quite cool blood, though his pulses were throbbing, and his poor, tired head was splitting, and there was a dreadful sinking at his heart.

It would have been so much easier for him if he could have put any enthusiasm into it like other men; if he could have burned and glowed, and been filled with those divine ecstasies, that joy unspeakable, that is in the midst of failure and loss the miraculous paradox of Christianity. He had none of these helps. He was giddy and sick, and

had a miserable feeling at his heart; but he sat down, in spite of his coldness and his cowardice, and wrote his letter.

He felt exactly like the rich young Ruler as he turned his back upon the world and renounced its vanities. He had not made the same choice, but the result had been the same.

He went away sorrowing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SILVER CORD.

‘Thou wilt not leave us in the dust.’

THERE was great consternation in Chesham Place when that letter of Tristram’s arrived. Lady Cornelia was frantic. She was quite sure that her son was mad. She was for locking him up in an asylum at once. She did not mend matters by writing an indignant and long-winded remonstrance, and sending Dr. Busby to call upon him.

Sir Tristram was indignant too, indignant and angry, but he did not ventilate his anger like her ladyship. He knew more of young men. He thought that by-and-by Tristram would reconsider this decision. Opposition would only fan the

flame. He talked over the situation with Cecil, his younger son, who was home from Oxford, who reiterated his belief that his brother was 'as mad as a hatter.' He was quite ready to step into his shoes. He had no scruples about the brewery. Like all Oxford men, he was ashamed of everything connected with trade, but he was quite ready to share in the profits.

Sir Tristram talked the matter over with his lawyers, and when the preliminaries were settled he wrote to his son and made him an offer—a handsome offer, as matters stood. He offered to transfer to Cecil his share in the brewery, with the accumulated results, and to give Tristram the portion of a younger son, the estate of Garlands, and the land in the county that the Lushingtons had from time to time acquired. It was a generous offer, but it fell far short of the funded wealth of the family and the share in the brewery.

Tristram's eyes filled with tears as he read his father's generous letter. He would have to dis-

appoint him in this, too. How could he accept the land and the estates that were purchased with the proceeds of the brewery? It would be the same as deriving the money direct from the drink traffic that he hated; it would be partaking in the ill-gotten gains.

Conscience, which had prevented him from becoming a partner in the brewery, prevented him from sharing in the accumulated profits of past years. Every acre of land had been bought with the money gained by the brewing of beer. Tristram had told himself at the onset that he would have nothing to do with it, that he would not touch the accursed thing.

He had to sit down again at that deal table and write another letter to Sir Tristram. It cost him more to write this second letter than the first had cost him. He was sorry to disappoint his father, but he didn't see how he could accept the offer. It was clearly as much the outcome of beer as the yearly income it had been arranged he should draw

from the brewery. If he accepted the land and the beautiful family place, and refused the money, the dirty, ill-gotten money, it would clearly be straining at a gnat and swallowing a camel. Feeling this, he had no alternative but to sit down and write that letter.

He declined Sir Tristram's offer—his 'munificent offer,' as he termed it—firmly but humbly. He was rather ashamed, if the truth must be told, of flaunting his conscience so often in Sir Tristram's face. It seemed like setting himself up as his judge. The brewery had been good enough for him, and his father before him; they had been troubled with no qualms about pocketing the unhallowed gold it brought in. It was left for Tristram, the latest descendant of a race of brewers, to discover that it was an unlawful trade, and that no God-fearing man who valued his own soul could engage in it.

Tristram didn't say all this. He said, as humbly as he could, that his conscience wouldn't allow him

to touch a penny of the money that had been made by beer. He had youth, and health, and strength, and he would earn his living like other men. It was quite beautiful to read what things he said about the new order he was going to join, the brotherhood where money would not be wanted. He was going to live among the poor, the lost, the most degraded; he was going to consecrate his life to an entire self-sacrifice, a poor man living among poor men.

Sir Tristram crumpled the letter up in his hand and used strong language when he read it. He not only crumpled it up, but he flung it across the room, where Dene found it when she came in a few hours after and saw it lying in a corner. There was no help for it; if his son would not listen to reason, he must take the consequences of his folly. The wealth that he had rejected would swell the fortunes of his other children, Cecil and Dene.

Sir Tristram was in a towering rage, and Lady Cornelia was in hysterics. She was now more con-

vinced than ever that Tristram was mad, and that he ought to be put under restraint. This blow, coming just at this inopportune time, quite took off the edge of her maternal pride in Dene's success.

Geraldine had been introduced by her mother at the last Drawing-room. Her début had created quite a sensation in the fashionable world. Columns had appeared in the society papers on her charms, her beauty, her distinguished appearance—her dress had come from Worth's—and her wealth. She was the acknowledged beauty of the season, and now she would be the richest heiress.

It was all quite new and delightful to Dene after having been shut up all her life in the country ; it was a wonder her head wasn't turned. It would have been quite turned if it hadn't been for that trouble of Tristram's. She was so sorry for Trim—so sorry and sad ! If he had been the black sheep of the family instead of the white sheep, she couldn't have been more sorry. She wanted so much to write to him and tell him what Mary had

said. She was sure it would comfort him. Everybody had said he was mad and a fanatic, everybody but Mary.

She took this letter of his that she found on the floor, and smoothed it out, and read it with shining eyes and glowing cheeks. When she had read it, she sat down and wrote him a little letter. She did not say anything about the wealth he had renounced, but she offered him a legacy that had been left to her by a maiden aunt, Lady Cornelia's sister, who had died young and unmarried, and left her small fortune to be divided among her nieces. There was no taint of the brewery in this legacy. The Earls of Sark had never defiled their white hands with trade, and there was no reason why Tristram should not accept it. Dene was so full of her offer that she did not say a word about the Drawing-room, or that train she had been practising so long to carry gracefully.

When she had finished the letter and sealed it, she opened it to add a postscript :

‘Who were his helpers in the work? And did there happen to be a Sisterhood working on the same lines?’

Dene told nobody what she had done, not even her mother. She was quite sure that she would have no sympathy from Lady Cornelia. She would say she was quixotic, like Trim, and most probably send her down into the country before the season was over.

Tristram showed Jayne Dene’s letter, and asked him what he should do. He didn’t like taking the girl’s money; not that she would feel it, this little two hundred pounds a year. She would spend it all on one Court dress, all and more, and it would be a real fortune to him. It would keep him from being dependent on the mission. He could pay his share with this like the rest, and it would leave his hands free for the work. Above all things, it was not tainted with beer!

‘I don’t think you should refuse her this privilege,’ Jayne said, with his eyes shining, and that

light on his face that always seemed like a reflection, a broken light. 'It may be a silver cord running all through her life, the beginning of miracles. I am sure she would not have made this offer if God had not put it into her heart to do some work for Him. It is not much she can do, a girl alone amid such surroundings; but she has done what she could.'

After that there was nothing more to be said. Tristram wrote and told Dene what Jayne had said about her giving up this legacy, the silver cord that would change the pattern of her life, change it and glorify it. He would not accept it for himself; but if she devoted it to the work of the mission, it would be accepted gladly, thankfully, and it would be returned a hundredfold into her bosom.

So the way was made clear—quite clear. One has only got to trust and to wait, and to do the right thing, and the way is always made clear.

There was so much work to do in that dreadful slum. There was work enough for a hundred

zealous workers, and there were only two or three pairs of hands to grapple with it all. There was a population of thirty thousand people and only one church! Not that if there had been a dozen churches it would have materially altered the case, because no one went to church. It was a big church with a tall steeple, and could be seen a long way off, and the sound of the bell—it had a very sweet-toned old bell that was always calling ‘Come! come!’—could be heard a long way off, but nobody responded to the invitation. Whatever work was done in the parish was done outside the church. The evils that were to be met and overcome were multifarious, and the work that had to be carried on was many-sided.

It was not all spiritual work. There were the bodies as well as the souls of the people to care for. Soup-kitchens, and free dinners, and coal-and-blanket distributions were part of the winter programme; just now there were other matters on hand. There was a night-school attached to the

mission for boys—boys of the difficult, dangerous age that defies the Board School; there were Bible-classes, temperance meetings, and mission services to be held daily, and there was a great deal of house-to-house visiting.

There was a great deal of work to be done, and just now there was only one man to do it—a man with a lame leg.

While Jayne was limping about the unsavoury courts looking after the sick folk, Tristram devoted himself to the classes and meetings. He could never have made himself heard in the crowded Band of Hope meetings on those hot summer nights if it had not been for the help of some lady workers who kept order among the children. He was not quite satisfied with the temperance meetings from the first. He didn't believe in calling people together once a week, to amuse them with little temperance songs and recitations, when there was a great work to be done. He was burning to begin work in earnest. Jayne did not see the

way clear just then, with the mission staff all away, to make any changes in the programme, and Tristram continued to fret and chafe, and not find the work so congenial as he had expected.

At the end of the week Jayne offered to change places, and Tristram went out into the great hive of swarming life, and made acquaintance with what, for want of a better name, society is pleased to term 'the dangerous classes.' He went up and down a great many courts and alleys, and into numberless poor men's homes. It seemed to him that most of the evils of life had taken up their abode in these unsavoury courts—poverty, disease, drunkenness. Doubtless for all these there were compensations, but he did not discover these all at once ; they were not to be met with easily, certainly not on the surface.

The sight of the misery, and the destitution, and the vice—the vice of drunkenness—filled him with sickness and loathing. It made his heart—his poor, weak heart for such a great work—sink down,

down, down into his very boots. It couldn't sink much lower. It used to sink every time he saw the door of a beer-shop swing to, and the crowds of men and women pouring in and out. Doors were always swinging open in the neighbourhood of those courts and alleys, and wretchedly-clad, half-starved men and women—women with little children in their arms or clinging to their skirts—were flowing in and out in a continuous stream. There was a door that he passed a dozen times a day, with a big sign-board above it inscribed with a familiar legend, 'Lushington's Entire,' in great crimson letters, that was always swinging to. People must have found something very attractive in that 'Entire,' for they went in, he remarked, with a look of expectant anxiety on their eager faces, and they came out happy and smiling, and wiping their lips.

Oh, how he hated that 'Entire'! He always felt sick and humiliated when he passed that particular corner.

He was passing it one day, when he ran across a lady whom he had seen at the Band of Hope meetings, keeping order among the children. He had often run across her during his visits to a particular court, where the fever had been exceptionally bad, but he had never spoken to her until to-day. He would not have spoken to her to-day, but she stopped him just outside the swinging-door, beneath the signboard that proclaimed his shame.

‘I beg your pardon, Mr.—’ she began.

‘Lushington,’ he answered, supplying the pause, and glancing up involuntarily to the signboard above his head.

The girl—she was no more than a girl, a pink-faced girl, with blue eyes and fluffy light hair, which she had crumpled up beneath a nurse’s bonnet—followed the direction of his eyes.

‘Oh!’ she said, and a light of recognition came into her face. She had heard—everybody had heard by this time—of the ridiculous young man who

had thrown away a million of money. 'I'm so glad!'

She had recognised him in a moment. It was like presenting his card.

CHAPTER IX.

THE GOAT AND COMPASSES.

‘Blest be Heaven
That brought me here to this poor house of ours,
Where all the brethren are so hard to warm.’

WHEN Geraldine had asked her brother, in that postscript which she opened her letter to add, if there was a Sisterhood connected with the mission, he had answered rather impatiently in the negative.

What had the mission to do with women? Its work was not woman’s work. He had certainly answered that question hastily. He had reckoned without his host.

If a Sisterhood did not exist in connection with the mission, there were lady helpers. How could

he be so idiotic as to think that any good work could be successfully carried on without the help of a woman?

The girl who introduced herself to Tristram outside the door of the Goat and Compasses, beneath that hateful signboard, was a lady helper. She wasn't exactly 'a Sister,' for there was no sisterhood at present. Only two or three ladies rented a little house, living together in a very simple way, and ministering to the needs of the poor people around them. It wasn't worthy the name of a Sisterhood.

There were so few of them, and their hands were so full, they hadn't time to form committees and make resolutions, and do things in an orthodox fashion; they had only time to attend the sick, and visit the poor, and dispense, according to their limited means, nourishment and clothing.

A Sisterhood means money and subscriptions flowing in. These lady helpers had no money, and there were no subscriptions. They were a handful

of women living on their humble means—living very barely, with painful economy—and distributing out of the surplus to the necessities of their poorer sisters.

‘I am so glad to have met you, Mr. Lushington,’ the girl in a Sister’s dress said, smiling and showing her white teeth.

She was such a little thing, and so fair and young-looking; she didn’t seem fit to be running about unprotected in this London slum.

‘I have wanted to know you so much,’ she went on a little breathlessly, and with the pretty pink colour coming into her cheeks; ‘I have heard so much about you. I am sure you have been sent in answer to our prayers. We want a champion so much. I am sure God has sent you!’

This was rather embarrassing to Tristram, to be stopped outside a public-house by a girl, and welcomed in this unconventional fashion. The girl had a sweet voice, with a reedy thrill in it that made the people who were passing by turn round

and listen to what she was saying. A delightful voice for a sick-room and for dull ears, but not exactly the voice one would choose to be addressed in outside a public-house.

‘See,’ she went on, ‘see! You have not come a moment too soon. The people are all pressing in to their destruction—men, women, children; the place will hardly hold them, and no one can keep them back!’

She was pointing to the open door of the Goat and Compasses, where the people were pressing in for their mid-day beer; the place was full to the door, and still the crowd came surging in.

Tristram hung his head.

‘What can I do?’ he said bitterly. He was thinking of that Band of Hope and the temperance meetings, the recitations and the little glees, and the puny efforts of the drum-and-fife band. What were these against this great giant of Intemperance? It was like tickling the ogre with a straw!

Perhaps the little Sister divined his thoughts.

‘Oh, there is so much you can do,’ she said eagerly. ‘It is only to be in earnest. Everything is possible when one is in earnest.’

‘Tell me where to begin,’ Tristram said helplessly. ‘I am willing to lay down my life for the cause, God knows. I would hold nothing back, if I only knew where to begin!’

‘Begin here,’ she said. ‘You could not find a better place. Address the people here, outside this stronghold—under—under your own standard;’ and she glanced up at that hateful sign. ‘Haul it down here, before all these people; tell them you have renounced it. They know what it has cost you. Oh, believe me, there is nothing in the world that moves people so much as a noble example! It is so much better to live a truth than to preach a truth.’

She carried him away with her words. There was an opaline fire in her blue eyes, with their wide pupils, and her lips were trembling, and her

words thrilled him, as she stood pleading with him at the door of that public-house.

‘I will do what I can,’ he said; ‘I will do what you tell me.’

She took him away with her. He was a tool in her hands; he was quite ready to do whatever she told him. He followed her meekly, like a sheep to the slaughter. He had just discovered that man, by himself, is incomplete; that he can do nothing without a woman.

It was a great discovery.

The little Sister took him back with her, and unfolded her plans to him by the way.

She lived quite near, in a poor house, with a grape-vine over the front, one of a row of poor houses, only that in her case the whole of the house was occupied by the Sisters, and the adjoining houses were let out as tenements, as many as ten families living in one house. There is nothing like living shoulder to shoulder with the people.

She took him over the 'home,' as she called it, before she unfolded her plans.

'See,' she said, opening the door of a big, barely-furnished room, with a table and some benches in it; 'this is our board-room. In this we hold all our meetings and our classes. We have a girls' club here once a week, a mothers' meeting, a working class, a Sunday-school, a prayer-meeting, a Confirmation class, something every day in the week. There are, besides, guilds that are the very backbone of our work. You must come and visit our guilds; they include Bible-classes, mission work, and, above all, temperance work. We have above a thousand women and girls belonging to our guilds.'

Tristram could only murmur a feeble assent. He could not understand all this great work being done by a mere handful of women.

'We should like to do a great deal more,' the little Sister said with a sigh; 'but we have no funds. We want to open a maternity branch, and

to extend our sick and poor relief fund, but our hands are tied for want of means. Oh, how we do want money! It would make your heart bleed to see the cases we have to turn away. It is so hard to refuse help when it seems a matter of life and death—and we have to do it every day!’

She wrung her hands as she spoke, and her reedy voice, with its soft, liquid inflexions, thrilled through him. Did she think he was Croesus, that she was appealing to him in that way? Perhaps she was thinking of that million of money he had flung away.

‘It is very sad,’ he said humbly, feeling guilty. ‘Have you no regular income, no resources?’

‘We have nothing!’ she said, with something like a moan—‘nothing but the little we bring ourselves. There are only five of us—sometimes only four. ‘One, Sister Katherine, is often away sick. We throw all that we have into the common fund, but it does not amount to much. We are none of us rich, but we give our all; that is’—here her face

flushed suddenly, and her eyelids drooped—‘the rest give all—everything; but I keep back a part. It is not much—only two hundred a year—but I shall not want to keep it back much longer, not another year.’

‘Why do you keep this back?’ Tristram asked abruptly.

He was angry with himself when he had spoken; he would have given anything to recall his words. What right had he to inquire into her affairs?

The girl did not answer his question for a moment. She stood looking out into the bare court, with the bit of blue sky above it. He was not sure if she was looking at the unlovely roofs and chimneys of those wretched hovels, or at the blue sky above, where the sun was shining, and where a white pigeon was straining across the blue.

‘You may well ask,’ she said, with a little break in her voice, and her lip quivering. ‘Having given up all, was it worth while to hold back this? It was like keeping back the price of the land. Oh,

you *must* know why I am keeping it back—you have a right to know, you who have given up so much !’

‘I had no right to ask you. I have no right to pry into your secrets,’ he said humbly, in a shame-faced way, and blushing under his sallow, white skin like a girl.

‘Oh yes, you have ! Are we not, each one of us, our brother’s keeper ? You have a right to know why I have held back a portion of the price of the field. Everybody here knows. I was engaged to be married before I came here. I could not marry anyone who could not feel as I feel. One does not meet with people every day who have the same call, who see and hear and feel alike—and—and I had to go out of my way to find such a one. He was not in my own station ; he was a schoolmaster—the schoolmaster of our parish. What did it matter ? He saw with my eyes, and he was eager to help, and he was called—distinctly called. He was ready to dedicate himself heart and soul to

the work—and—and in order to fit him for it the better, I sent him to college. He has been at Oxford over two years; he will be ordained next year. It was for him, to fit him for this great work, I kept back a part of the price of the land.'

She spoke hurriedly, with her lips trembling and her voice breaking, and when she had ended she put her hand over her heart, and the colour dropped out of her face as suddenly as it had come in.

'I think you have done a noble thing,' Tristram said huskily. He had heard of women doing this sort of thing for their lovers before, but he had never met with a woman who had done it. He could hardly believe that this little bit of a girl, with her round blue eyes, and her fluffy hair, and that ridiculous reedy voice like a child's, should have done this noble thing.

'Oh no! it is not at all noble; it was, perhaps, a selfish thing to do. Other men would have done the work, would have thrown themselves into it, and done it quite as well, without being ordained.

Why, even you'—she paused and looked at Tristram as if she had not discovered it until now—'you are not ordained——'

'No,' he said humbly, 'I am only a layman.'

'And why not?' she went on, speaking hurriedly in her eager way—'why not? the consecration is the same. But for Percival it would be different. He was one of the people, and they would not have listened to him without—without some distinction, some authority. He would have more influence if he were in the Church, an ordained priest. Oh, I hope I have not been doing wrong!'

'I am sure you are doing right,' Tristram said, smiling at her doubts. 'You have done it from the best motives'—he was going to say the highest, but he corrected himself, and said 'best'; it is so difficult to gauge motives by an exact and arbitrary standard.

'I could not bear him to labour at a disadvantage,' she said, with her voice shaking just perceptibly. 'I have mapped out his life for him—there is so

much waiting for him to do!' And she lifted up her eyes to the unlovely roofs, and the grimy windows, and the chimney-pots.

There was no opaline fire in them now, Tristram noticed, and her eyelashes were wet.

He was quite sorry for her. To wait three years for a champion, and to educate him and equip him for the work—the work she had mapped out for him—and perhaps after all, after three years' waiting, to be disappointed! He could not help being sorry for her.

'You must let me be your champion meanwhile,' he said. 'There is plenty of work for all.'

'Oh yes,' she said, coming back to the question that had brought him there, and looking no longer up at the dull roofs and the far-off sky, 'there is plenty of work for all. It cannot wait a single day. There is a battle which has no end, to be fought every day with a fierce, devouring dragon lurking at every street corner. Oh, you don't know what a cruel, remorseless dragon it is! It has no pity: it

devours men, women, children. There is not a house here, in all these courts and alleys, that is not filled with its victims. There are two men in one court down with delirium tremens; there is a woman who has been half murdered by a drunken husband; there are hundreds of little children who are dying daily of neglect and starvation; homes are broken up every week, and whole families turned adrift, because the father—alas! sometimes the mother—has “broken out,” and spent the last penny in the public-house. Go up these courts and alleys of a night—Saturday nights, when the men get their wages, and the women are paid for their work—and see the crowds pouring into the open doors. Listen to the language, and hear the screams of the women and the cries of the children! Oh, it is pitiful!

Tristram covered his face with his hands. He was thinking of those barrels in his father's cellars. The picture was too dreadful!

‘What can I do?’ he said presently. His face

was very pale, and there were beads of perspiration on his forehead.

‘Do? You can stand outside that place where I met you, beneath that signboard—which is an ensign of your shame and your victory—and warn all those poor things who are pressing on to their ruin.’

‘Speak outside that place?’ he faltered, turning quite a shade paler—not paler, but grayer.

Did he lack the courage of his convictions, after all? Was he afraid of coming out and taking a stand—a decided stand? The little Sister saw his face grow suddenly gray, and she marked the hesitation in his voice. He was not like her Champion—the man who was being trained to do her bidding, whose life she had mapped out; he would be ready to stand up at any moment, whenever she bade him, in the street, on the housetop—he would not hesitate a moment.

‘Why not?’ she said, with a little inflexion of impatience in her reedy voice—impatience or scorn.

‘Women have gone down on their knees outside these places, and prayed aloud; they have lifted up their voices in the streets, and prayed and wept. Their warnings and their intercession have not been in vain. What a woman has done you would not——’

He did not let her finish the sentence.

‘I will speak there to-night,’ he said; ‘I am but a poor speaker; I have never spoken in the street before. Whatever is given me to say, I will say. I cannot say anything of myself.’

CHAPTER X.

SISTER WINIVER.

‘Oh, shut me round with narrowing nunnery walls.’

THE oracle had spoken.

Tristram had been waiting all this time for a message, and it had come to him in the street. It had been spoken by a woman. There was no mistaking it. It came to him clear, sharp, and incisive. If he wanted to reach the people he must go among them, he must not wait for them to come to him. If he had a message to deliver to them he must go where they congregate.

He must take his stand at the street corners; he must cry aloud in the street.

He cried aloud that very night. There is

nothing like doing things at once — good things, things that will help other people. There may never be another chance of reaching them, certainly not of reaching the same people. The stream is always flowing on; a day, an hour hence, they will have drifted out of reach—perhaps out of *all* reach.

It was not exactly a pleasant place to speak in, that street corner. It was a very public and exposed place, the junction of three streets, and it was surrounded by courts and alleys. It was the centre of a swarming hive of human life.

Tristram could not make his voice heard very far when he took up his stand beneath the lamp-post, with that signboard of his father's brewery just over his head by way of introduction. He was not addressing anyone in particular when he began, but by-and-by a crowd collected, and then his words came freer. Before he had stood there a quarter of an hour there was quite a concourse of people outside that swinging door. It did not swing quite so often, for the people stopped to

listen ; the door was just handy—they could go in at any time, and they paused outside and listened.

People will generally listen if one speaks aloud at a street corner. They may not have much interest in what is being said, but they will stop and listen. Something arrests their feet, and they refuse to move on.

The people who listened to Tristram were not interested very much in what he was saying ; they had heard it before, it was not at all new to them. He was pointing out the broad way and the narrow way, the easy way and the rough way. They had had that choice presented to them before, and most of them standing there had already made their choice.

There were some young boys and lads jeering at him in the crowd—‘Tell us something new, guv’ner,’ they were saying ; and a costermonger, with some vegetables on his barrow, kept drowning his words with his stentorian cries, ‘Summer cabbages !’ He had not a great many cabbages left on

his barrow ; he need not have been in such a hurry to sell them. Someone reminded him of this. It was the little Sister, who stood near in the crowd, but Tristram did not see her. He did not see any one or anything but that signboard overhead, and a crowd of faces piled upon each other, swimming before his eyes like faces in a moving glass, and he remembered only that for all these he should have to give account.

The little Sister said something to the man with the barrow, and a whisper passed through the crowd. And then a very strange thing happened. Everybody in the crowd, with that whisper going round, looked up at the signboard over the speaker's head, the handsome board with the scarlet letters : ' Lushington's Entire.' And the jeering voices were hushed in a moment ; you could have heard a pin drop.

' Would you please to step on the barrer, guv'ner, I'll keep it steady,' the costermonger said, taking off his greasy cap like a gentleman.

Tristram did not want a second invitation. He mounted the barrow among the cabbages, and from that point of vantage addressed the crowd.

It was while he was addressing the crowd from the costermonger's barrow that a carriage drove by. At least, it did not drive by; it drew up suddenly for a few minutes, and a lady opened the window and looked out. The windows were partly drawn up, and the blinds were down though it was a sultry July night. The only occupant of the carriage was a lady, thickly veiled, who drew up her veil for a moment to look at the strange sight. A gentleman addressing a crowd outside a public-house, from a costermonger's barrow!

It was too brief a view of the face in the carriage for anyone standing by to have recognised it, and it was a strikingly beautiful face.

She only paused a minute listening to Tristram's words. It was astonishing how far his voice could be heard now. It could only be heard a few yards off when he began to speak; it could be heard now

distinctly at the edge of the crowd. The lady pulled up the window sharply, and told the coachman to drive on.

It was quite a gay night for the East End. A most unusual thing happened. No sooner had the first carriage driven away than another drove by and stopped at the edge of the crowd. At least, it was a hansom this time, and the gentleman inside put out his head, as the lady had done, and looked inquiringly at the man on the barrow. Unlike the lady, his face was not veiled. It was a young, handsome, manly face; it would have been a pity to cover it up.

The face matched the figure: a young, strong, manly figure, full of grace and strength, beautifully endowed by nature, and quite faultlessly dressed—an unusual figure to meet on a summer night in that London slum.

The young man waited at the edge of the crowd to listen for a longer time than the lady had waited, and his handsome face flushed scarlet as he listened,

and his brow clouded. Once, quite involuntarily, the speaker turned round, and saw him leaning out of the hansom, and their eyes met. He pulled the check-string, and shouted to the driver to drive on ; but it was too late. Tristram had seen and recognised him. It was his brother Cecil.

The burning words were frozen on the speaker's lips ; the eager, hurried warnings and invitations that were pouring out in a stream of impassioned eloquence the moment before stuck in his throat. He could not pick up the thread he had lost. The sight of his brother's face had put it all out of his mind. He could only stammer, and mop his damp forehead, and his faltering lips, and get down from among the cabbages in a most undignified manner.

When the little Sister got back to the 'home,' the lady who had stopped the cab to listen was there before her.

'You here!' she said by way of greeting, in a tone of surprise.

It was not a very warm greeting. There was more of surprise than welcome in the little Sister's voice.

'Yes,' said the other meekly; 'I've come again. I hope you won't send me away.'

'We never send anyone away,' the Sister said a little sharply, 'not if they are in earnest.'

'I am in earnest this time, dear. I have come to stay, if you will have me.'

The little Sister looked at her with a certain amount of doubt in her keen blue eyes. It seemed quite unworthy to doubt the sincerity of the beautiful stranger—unworthy and unlike the little Sister.

'You can make another trial if you like,' she said; but she didn't say it very graciously.

'Dear little Sister,' the stranger said, flinging herself down in a heap on the floor at the girl's knee, 'I'm really in earnest now. I will never, never go away if you will keep me here! I have quite made up my mind now. Something has hap-

pened since I was here last that has altered everything. I cannot go back if I would !'

She was talking wildly, with her hot face buried in the Sister's lap, and her dark hair falling about her. It was such beautiful hair, and it fell over her shoulders in a shower, and her rich dress lay in great shining folds on the floor.

'You are welcome to make another trial,' the little Sister said coldly. 'You know best whether you are prepared to put aside the pleasures of the world—your world—and give up your life to thankless, uncongenial labour. Unless you can do it from the right motive—there is only one motive that will enable you to do it—it is better not to attempt it at all.'

The stranger looked up with a wild light in her beautiful dark eyes, and her hot cheeks were crimson, and her lips were tremulous.

'If I could tell you all,' she said passionately, 'you would not doubt me. *He* has made it impossible for me to go back. If you will give me

shelter here, I will do the meanest work ; I will toil day and night. You shall never have reason to doubt me. You would not blame me for going back if you knew all ; but it is over now, and there is nothing to drag me back !' And she wrung her hands as she spoke.

'You know best ; you can make another trial. After every false step it is harder to recover yourself.'

The woman laughed. Her laugh was wild, like her eyes.

'Who should know that so well as I ?' she said bitterly.

'You will find your dress in your old room,' the Sister said coldly. 'There is plenty for you to do here ; you can begin at once. Sister Katherine has been up three nights with a man in delirium tremens. He has nearly killed his wife ; they are both in the same room. He will kill himself if he is not watched—if he is left alone a single minute. Sister Katherine is worn out ; you can take her place if you like.'

‘I will go at once,’ the woman said meekly.

She came down again presently in her nurse’s dress, with all her beautiful black hair hidden away beneath a cap, and the lines of her stately figure concealed under an ill-fitting, hideous serge gown. She could not hide the scarlet of her cheeks or the brightness of her eyes, and she had forgotten to take the rings off her fingers.

‘I am ready,’ she said meekly, folding her white hands with the jewels gleaming upon them over her coarse gown.

‘You cannot go in these,’ the little Sister said, pointing to the rings.

She drew them off and laid them on the table in a little glittering heap; but there was one that would not come off, a plain gold circlet. The Sister had not noticed it beneath those heavy jewelled rings till now.

‘Oh, I did not know you were married,’ she said softly.

‘I have been twice married,’ the woman said

quickly; and she drew on her cotton gloves with fierce impatience; but she did not volunteer any further information.

‘Perhaps you are tired, Winiver,’ the Sister said, speaking more gently than she had yet done. ‘It will be a trying night for whoever sits up with the wretched man; and he may die before morning. Do you think you are fit for it?’

‘Fit for it? I could stay up for a week without getting tired. I should not mind his raving, and if the worst came, I would do what I could. If you want to keep me here, make me useful; send me where no one else will go. You know that I will do my best. If I can be useful to poor sick people, it will keep me from thinking about myself.’

The two Sisters went out together. They were silent until they reached the corner where Tristram had been speaking, when Sister Winiver, looking round, seemed to remember something.

‘Who was that man who was speaking to the

crowd?' she asked suddenly. 'I heard him speaking as I passed.'

'It is Tristram Lushington, the young brewer, who has given up a million of money,' the Sister answered. She thought everybody had heard of him.

'Lushington—Tristram Lushington? Is he a son of Lady Cornelia, do you know? and has he a sister, a lovely young sister, who has just been presented, and who is the richest heiress in London?'

She asked the question eagerly, and she stopped in the middle of the court they were passing through for the Sister's answer.

'I know nothing about the world,' the little Sister said with some asperity. 'I have given it up, with the things that belong to it. I only know that Tristram Lushington has been snatched as a brand from the burning, and that God has given him a great work to do—and—and I think he will do it.'

CHAPTER XI.

‘ THE VOICE OF THE WEEPER.’

‘ Peace ; come away : the song of woe
Is, after all, an earthly song.’

MARY GASCOIGNE was very unhappy. She was quite sure she had done right, but she was miserable, notwithstanding. She would lock herself in her room and pull out those old letters she had received from Tristram in the old days, which seemed so far away now, and a mist would come before her eyes so that she could not read a single word, and her hot, foolish tears would fall upon the dear pages and blur the well-remembered lines. She knew them by heart, she had no need to read them ; but she was only a woman, and it comforted her to take them out of their hiding-place and weep over them.

Life is so long ; time is so slow to the young ; the days succeeded each other with such weary monotony, but they brought no forgetting, no happy oblivion. Mary Gascoigne had trusted to time to heal the wound, and at the end of a month, a month that seemed a year, it was as raw and as new as ever. She had never regretted her decision for an hour all through this time—she was quite sure she had done right—but she was miserable and lonely, and, in spite of herself, she hungered for a life more complete than this sad, dreadful, monotonous existence.

Sometimes she looked in the glass and wondered that her trouble had left no deeper mark on the beautiful face that smiled sadly back at her. She did not see very deep, or she could not read her own face aright ; it is so hard to read the familiar face that one looks at in the glass with so little love or interest, that one goes away and forgets entirely what manner of face it was.

Other people looking at Mary would have noticed

that her face, always serious, had a deeper earnestness in it now, and that there was no ready smile on her lips. The first impress of a great grief on the countenance is not the stamping and puckering with wrinkles—they come in due course; it is the altered smile. It does not come so readily as of old; it is not always lurking at the corners of the lips; it has to be summoned, and it comes tardily.

Mary smiled now when she greeted her mother, and strove to dispel the gloom that was settling down upon her; it was not her old smile, but it suited her ladyship's case better.

Lady Bredwardine had not taken her trouble lightly; she had given herself up to her grief, and she was sinking beneath the intolerable weight of it. There is a great deal in temperament, and her ladyship's was naturally a gloomy temperament, and there was no rebound in it. Her griefs had been exceptional griefs, and they had come upon her with overwhelming suddenness. The wonder was that they had not crushed her beneath them.

They had been crushing her slowly ever since they had fallen. They had crushed all interest in life out of her. She had gone on living, but she took no interest in the things about her. The pleasures, the occupations, the anxieties, the longings of life were things that were strange to her. She could not understand how anyone could be affected by them. At fifty she was a shrivelled, selfish, worn-out old woman, who made herself and everybody about her miserable. She was always worrying and wearying, and weeping and moaning. She did not know when she wept or moaned.

She shut herself up from the world and its sympathy; since the death of her son she had seen no one but the Rector of the place. She had lived alone in this great house, seeing no one but Mary—Mary and her lover; she already looked upon Tristram as a son. He was not excluded with the rest of the world when the blow fell that bereft her of her only son. Tristram would be her son by-and-by, though he would never take the place

of the one that was so rudely snatched away from her. She would have to leave Mary with him, and he would stand in her boy's place—in her husband's place—and sit in his seat, and keep up the glories of the old house. By-and-by, perhaps, his children—Mary's children—with the Gascoigne blood in them, would bring back something of the joy and gladness, the tender happiness, of the old days; but she would not be there to see it; she would be in another mansion, elsewhere.

When Tristram failed her, and went off on that quixotic mission, Lady Bredwardine shrank more into herself than ever, and the cloud of gloom that hung about her deepened. All her plans for Mary's future were shattered, and she was too worn-out and weary of life to make fresh ones. It was like another blow. She could only walk about as she used to do in the first days of her bereavement, and moan and wring her hands.

It was a sad life for a girl like Mary, shut up in this great, silent, gloomy house, listening to the

moans and complaints of a sorrowful, selfish old woman. The silence and sadness of the house, and the dreary grandeur of the big shut-up state-rooms, oppressed Mary more at this time than it had ever done before within her remembrance. She used to long, as she had never longed before, for a simpler and more busy life. She wanted to do something for other people ; she wanted to be of use in the world, of use like—like her lover. The parish, with its small charities and little goody clubs, no longer satisfied her. She yearned for a larger field. She said something of this to the Rector one day when he called to see Lady Bredwardine—he often called now—and he looked grave, and reminded her of her duty to her mother.

‘ Her ladyship wants all your care,’ he said gravely ; ‘ she is more shaken than I have ever seen her—more shaken and weaker. This disappointment’—he called Tristram’s defection ‘ a disappointment’—‘ has tried her more than anything I can remember, except, indeed, her great

loss; it is the last straw. I fear she will never rally from it. I think Lady Bredwardine should see her medical adviser.'

Mary looked at her mother with new eyes after this interview—new eyes sharpened by fear. She was not looking paler than her wont, but she was certainly thinner, she remarked. One cannot go on living mechanically, supporting the functions of life on the appetite of a bird, without losing flesh and wearing away the material elements of this mortal coil. Mary was astonished that she had not observed before this change in her mother. It quite frightened her to see how transparent her hands were, and how her figure had shrunk and her cheeks had fallen in.

On the pretence of some ailment of her own, Mary managed to get Lady Bredwardine to see her medical adviser a few days after the Rector's warning. She had not sent for him a minute too soon.

The doctor was closeted a long time with her ladyship, and then he saw Mary. Lady Bredwardine

had asked him some strange questions. People do sometimes ask their doctors strange questions, but they cannot always bear to have them answered truthfully. A merciful prevarication is sometimes, oftentimes, wiser and kinder than a direct answer.

Lady Bredwardine had asked her medical counsellor how long she had to live. He had looked at her with a grave pity in his kind eyes, but he had answered her question with professional ambiguity.

'That, to a great extent, depends upon yourself,' he had said. 'There is no reason why your ladyship should not live as long as—well, not exactly Methuselah—to the limit assigned to ordinary human lives. With more attention to diet, and care—extreme care—in avoiding shocks to the system, you will do very well; there is really no cause for anxiety—but you must be careful.'

With this warning the doctor took his leave. Before he went away he saw Mary. He repeated in substance what he had said to her ladyship; but he warned her not to cross her mother or allow her to

be crossed or excited in any way, and to guard her from shocks. Any sudden shock, or excitement, or opposition might be attended with very grave results.

Mary did not ask what the results he feared were, but she watched him drive away in his carriage, down the long avenue beneath the beeches, with a strange sinking at her heart.

The next day Lady Bredwardine made a communication to her. It did not stir her pulses the least, but it set her a-thinking. She informed her, in the solemn, formal way in which she had accustomed herself to speak of quite every-day things, that she had written to Cecil; she had asked him to come down.

Mary puzzled all day over that piece of news her ladyship had told her. She could not for the life of her think why she had sent for Cecil. She knew her mother's fondness for Lady Cornelia's children; they had been brought up with her own, and had been near neighbours all their lives; but this did not account for her sending for Cecil. She

had not seen him, Mary remembered, since Howard's death; she had not seen anyone, not even Lady Cornelia, only Tristram and Dene, but she looked upon them as her own children. The more she thought about it, the more Mary was puzzled to understand why her ladyship had sent for Cecil.

She found out the reason the next day.

Lady Bredwardine's summons—it was not an invitation, it was a summons—reached Cecil a few days after his encounter with his brother outside the public-house.

The dreadful picture had never been out of his eyes since that unhappy night. In an evil hour he had yielded to Dene's entreaties to look after Tristram, and he had hired a hansom—he would not go in the paternal carriage—and driven across London from the West to the East to look him up.

'As far as the East is from the West' is the greatest distance the human mind can grasp, and it comforts some of us to remember that it is so

far. From the West of London, with its brightness and luxury, to the East, with its dulness and poverty, is only an hour's drive; we have not to go far to find our sins—our sins and shortcomings, that we had set so far away from us—alive and in rags, crying out to us as we pass!

Cecil certainly heard a voice crying to him, as he drove past in a hansom on that miserable night—a familiar voice that he had known and honoured all his life.

It was crying out to him, and to all who stood near, 'to touch not the accursed thing!' He had not heard much, but he had heard those words, and he had met the infinite appeal and entreaty in his brother's eyes, and he had shouted to the driver to 'drive on.'

He was trembling all over with mortification and shame when he reached home. He had not said a word to Sir Tristram or her ladyship when he had got home; he would not have bowed his mother's proud head for the world with that humiliating story.

He went straight to his room, and it was there that Dene found him, looking white and uncomfortable.

She got the story from him, whether he would or not. She heard all about that costermonger's barrow, and the cabbages, and the disorderly mob, and the young woman in a Sister's dress keeping order.

Her face flushed from white to red while she heard it, and paled from red to white. She did not know whether she was sad or glad. It was altogether a new sensation. The situation was new; it required a new set of sentiments to contemplate it.

'I did not know that Trim had the courage,' she said, in an awe-stricken voice. 'We used to call him a coward, because he cried at pain.'

'He's not a coward,' Cecil said gloomily. 'If he does these things now, I don't know where he'll stop——'

He had a vision of Tristram leading a new Salvation Army across London, to the exhilarating strains

of a drum-and-fife band. He paused and shuddered.

‘You will not tell anyone, Dene,’ he said huskily. ‘It would be all over the clubs in a day. I should have to go abroad. I shouldn’t be able to stand it!’

There were real tears in his eyes as he spoke. He was so dreadfully afraid of public opinion.

‘Of course I shan’t tell anyone!’ Dene said shortly. She had no patience with him.

‘I wouldn’t have Southernhay hear of it for the world!’ Cecil groaned.

‘I don’t care a bit if the Duke hears of it!’ Dene said indignantly, with a rising colour. ‘He knows all about Tristram; everybody knows about Tristram, and what a noble thing he has done! If the Duke is ashamed of the connection, I’m sure he’s quite welcome to take his title elsewhere! You don’t think I’m such a mean thing as to care about being a Duchess, Ciss? I would rather marry a man who had done a noble thing like Tristram than marry a duke. There’s something bigger in the

world than titles and a long line of dead-and-gone ancestors. Look what a lot poor Lady Bredwardine has on her walls, and how unhappy she is! She would be quite as well off without them. After all, Ciss, there's only one kind of nobility—and Trim has come as near it as any man—the nobility of an unselfish life :

“ Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.” ’

‘ You’d better tell the Duke that when he calls to-morrow,’ Cecil said, with something very like a sneer. ‘ He’s a lively illustration of the text !’

CHAPTER XII.

A WHISPER ACROSS THE GRASS.

‘Behold, ye speak an idle thing ;
Ye never knew the sacred dust.’

THE next day Cecil received Lady Bredwardine’s invitation. He did not hurry himself to accept it. He had an idea that she wanted to talk to him about his brother, and his engagement to Mary. He hadn’t much interest in other people’s love affairs, and he wrote back to her ladyship to say he had a pressing engagement for the next day, but he would come down the day following.

It was rather a bore being summoned away from town just at the close of the season, when there were two or three good things coming off, to listen to the complaints of an old woman.

Lady Bredwardine saw Cecil alone ; Mary was nowhere visible. He thought he had never seen the old place look so fine as it did to-day, as he drove up the wide avenue between the beeches, and caught delightful views of the red brick building, with its deeply-recessed windows, and quaint turrets and gables, and the beautiful gate-tower, sculptured with the emblazonments of the Gascoignes.

It was all so mellow with age, and had an old-world stateliness about it, as if it had been the dwelling-place of lords and ladies for generations ; there was not a suspicion of trade about it. Money could not buy this kind of thing, Cecil told himself, as he drove up the avenue ; whoever had built this place hadn't made his money out of beer. After all, there was something in the *ancienne noblesse*.

Perhaps his mind had been dwelling on this subject during the journey. Dene was going to make a magnificent alliance ; it would be her own fault if she did not. A peer of the realm, with a garter

and strawberry-leaves, no less a personage than the Duke of Southernhay, had requested permission of Sir Tristram to address his daughter. He had not gone to Dene first; he had gone to her father. There were tales about the Duke—what bachelor Duke has reached thirty-five without tales, sad tales, being whispered about him? Perhaps Sir Tristram had not heard the tales, or he had remembered his own youth, and given the Duke credit for having sown his wild oats. At any rate, he gave him the permission that he sought.

It was certainly the beer that had brought this about. If Dene had not been the richest heiress of the season, so distinguished a nobleman would not have laid his strawberry-leaves at her feet. She had Tristram to thank for this—Tristram and his ridiculous quixotism.

Cecil was closeted with Lady Bredwardine nearly an hour, and when he came out and drove back down the avenue he looked flushed and nervous. Something her ladyship had said to him made him

look at the place with new interest, as he drove back. He even drew up at one part of the avenue where a good view of the house could be obtained, and looked back. He could see the park from here, with the deer sheltering beneath the trees, and the terraced gardens, which were just now in their richest summer bloom. It was a sight to touch the heart of a jaded Londoner. He couldn't think how Tristram could have given it all up—Bredwardine and Mary!

After all, this was only the casket, and Mary the jewel it enclosed—a jewel quite worthy of the setting.

Mary saw Cecil drive away; she had not seen him come; she had been buried in a book, and she had not looked up from it when she heard the sound of carriage-wheels in the gravelled court below. Most young women would have been glad of an excuse to look up from the book that Mary was reading, if they had heard the sound of carriage-wheels in the court beneath. They would

have been glad of an excuse to yawn and look up. It was not a yellow-back. There were no yellow-backs in the library at Bredwardine. There were nothing but dingy, parchment-covered, unattractive old books on the many, many shelves that lined the long gloomy room from floor to ceiling. Nobody knew who had collected this library of old books; it had grown. It had not been added to for generations. Frivolous modern books of literature, and science, and the questions of the day were excluded from those sacred shelves, and found a more congenial resting-place elsewhere.

A change had come over Mary Gascoigne's reading since her lover had shocked everybody by his quixotism. She had sought among the old books on the shelves for a parallel—it was no use looking for it in modern books—and she found what she sought among the Lives of the Saints in those old musty, parchment-covered tomes that hadn't been opened for a century. She shut herself up in the library, day after day, with her books, and read

those wonderful old heroic stories that are ever new. She was never tired of reading them. She found a good many parallels in the early years of the Church. The Great Renunciation was quite a common thing in those old early days; it grew rarer and rarer as the years wore on.

Mary, with her mind full of the saintly lives she had been reading about, saw Cecil drive away, and then she rose up with a sigh and put away her book. She was crossing the gallery to go to her mother's apartments, when from one of the long windows she saw her ladyship crossing the park in the direction of the village.

It was not often Lady Bredwardine went out alone, and she had not been out for weeks. Mary could not understand why she should be crossing the park at that hour of the day, and she remarked, with a vague feeling of wonder, that her ladyship was walking in an abstracted, hurried manner that was unusual to her. Whom could she want to see in the village?

Mary put on her broad sun-hat and followed her mother through the park ; she did not think it was safe for her to go so far alone. The path she had taken led to the church, as well as to the village, and when it came to the path where the roads met, Lady Bredwardine turned off in the direction of the church. She had reached the church before Mary overtook her.

It was an old country church, like hundreds of others in the West Country, with a square flint tower and beautiful old Decorated windows. The yard that led up to it was full of humble folk who had passed their uneventful lives in the village below, and been gathered together here, generation after generation. The yard was full of old stones, all aslant now, and covered with lichen and moss, inscribed with the names of the humble dead, and with touching inscriptions and verses from Holy Writ, full of simple faith and hope.

Lady Bredwardine hurried up the church path

between the graves to the chancel door, which she unlocked, and passed into the church.

The Gascoignes had a mortuary chapel attached to the church, full of old tombs and effigies of those who slept beneath; and of this chapel, which opened into the chancel, Lady Bredwardine had a private key.

There was a big, gloomy family pew in the chapel, and above it still hung the hatchment that had been put up when her husband died. The Gascoignes for centuries past had been buried beneath the stones of the chapel. In the great vault, to which there was access by a flight of stone stairs outside the chancel door, there were deposited the remains of Earls of Bredwardine since early Tudor times. There was one old Earl in a mouldy red velvet coffin, with a gilt coronet on the lid, who had been stood up there when Queen Mary was on the throne, and he was standing there still.

The old house with its ancient glories had passed away, and a new mansion—that was already old—

had risen on its site, while he had been standing there in the darkness and the dust.

Lady Bredwardine's late husband did not lie with his kinsfolk. He was buried in the nave, outside the chapel where he had worshipped so many years, and an altar-tomb of white marble, with a recumbent figure, was raised above him to mark the spot. It was a wonderful tomb, and the figure it bore was the work of a great artist. It represented the late Earl sleeping with his head on his hand, as he had been found on that memorable morning when Lady Bredwardine had awoke and found him dead by her side; the marble face resting on a marble pillow was a life-like representation of the Earl as he was found on that blue June day—the face, and the figure, and the beautiful transparent hands, and the white drapery falling in light folds about him.

It was a noble face, nobly conceived; a sensitive, refined face, delicate as a woman's, with the light of a high resolve on the marble forehead, which

was shadowed with rugged masses of loose curls. It was quite unlike the effigies of the old Gascoignes in the chapel, the marble earls who had been sleeping for centuries on their marble beds.

It was not a funereal monument: it was a beautiful creation instinct with life and hope and immortality.

Lady Bredwardine had to pass the monument every time she entered or left the church; she was accustomed to stand beside it Sunday after Sunday while the congregation filed out. She was so jealous of other eyes looking upon it! She waited behind the rest at the head of the tomb, with her head bowed, and her hands clasped, until everybody had passed out. No vulgar eyes could look upon him while she stood there. She wanted to shield him in death from the impertinent gaze of the curious and the indifferent. When she left the church the figure was covered with a white shroud. It was covered now, when Mary Gascoigne entered the church, and her mother was standing beside it

—a black, drooping figure beside the white shrouded monument. Something in her attitude arrested Mary's footsteps as she stood within the dusky chapel looking out into the nave.

While Mary waited, Lady Bredwardine drew aside the cloth that covered the marble face, and she heard her moan as the linen covering slipped off the tomb and lay in a heap at her feet.

She was standing beside it now as she stood on Sundays while the village folk left the church, only that to-day she was not silent. She was talking to the sleeping Earl as she would have talked to him in life, in eager, hurried sentences. She was telling him something, something that she had done, speaking softly, quickly, with the eager assurance and relief in her tones of one who had carried out an injunction that had been laid upon her.

'I have done as you wished,' she said: 'I have spoken to him, and he is willing. It will be the best for Mary. She will be safe and cared for; she

will not be alone when I come. Go back, dearest, to your happy place! Oh, go back, go back! There is no other to be anxious for now, no one but Mary; we must leave her, we have done what we could, we must trust her to God!’

Mary turned away; it seemed like profanation to stand there listening to the mourner talking to her dead. Whatever she had to say was addressed to the dull ears of the sleeping figure. She put out a hand in the pale gloom and touched the marble, and a soft, long sigh, that seemed to draw the breath out of her laden bosom, sobbed through the building.

Mary hurried out of the chapel in a state of agitation. She could not control her limbs trembling beneath her, and that long-drawn sigh following her like a whisper across the grass.

What had the Countess been promising for her?

She fled softly beneath the trees through the park—she would not have Lady Bredwardine know

she had been watching her for the world—and the sighing voice followed her footsteps back to the house.

‘I have spoken to him, and he is willing.’ Oh, what had she ‘spoken’ to Cecil?

CHAPTER XIII.

IN THE TWILIGHT.

‘ At night she weeps, How vain am I !
How should he love a thing so low ?’

MARY was not left long in doubt of the purport of her mother’s interview with Cecil, and the nature of the promise she had extracted from him.

Lady Bredwardine sent for her the same evening in the June twilight, while she was pacing up and down the long many-windowed room, as was her wont, when the sun was setting. The sun ought to have been setting now, but there was a mist of rain in the sky, and the twilight had fallen early. The trees of the park had veiled themselves in a mist, and loomed gray and ghostly in the growing dusk, and a soft, small rain was falling.

Lady Bredwardine was slowly pacing the room when Mary came in ; she did not stop, she went on with her walk, but Mary noticed that her footsteps lagged and faltered now and again, and that she seemed to have altered and shrunk since she had last seen her hurrying across the park.

She looked at her daughter with a shade of anxiety on her white face, and her voice was not quite steady, and Mary remarked that she pressed her hand over her heart.

‘Cecil has been here,’ her ladyship said presently ; ‘do you know why I sent for him ?’

‘No, mamma.’

Mary spoke truly ; she had not the least idea why the Countess had sent for Cecil.

‘I sent for him to ask him to take his brother’s place——’

‘Tristram’s place?’ Mary faltered. She could not understand what her mother meant, but a vision had risen up before her eyes of the dim aisle, and the sleeping figure on the tomb, and the words

were still ringing in her ears: 'It will be best for Mary.'

What could this have to do with her lover?

'I cannot always be with you,' the Countess went on, not heeding Mary's interruption; 'in the nature of things, I—I must go away some day. I may be called away at any time—life is uncertain—and I could not go away and leave you here unprotected.'

'Dear mamma,' Mary cried, her tears falling as she spoke, 'why need we talk about this now?'

'It must be talked about some time,' her ladyship said almost severely; 'and there is no time like the present. We must look it in the face, Mary. When—when I go away—I may go suddenly, like—like the others—you will be here alone.' She looked wistfully at the girl standing by the window, watching the rain and the mist blotting and blurring all the familiar landscape. 'There will be nothing left, when I am gone, to keep this place up. It would have been different if Tristram had not done

this cruel thing—this cruel, selfish, inconsiderate thing!’

She wrung her hands as she spoke, and moaned. ‘Oh,’ she cried in an agitated voice, ‘he has left me no alternative! I could not go and leave you here, Mary! There is no time for other plans; I have done my best—I have done what he would wish, your father in heaven—I have asked Cecil to take his brother’s place——’

Mary gave a startled cry.

‘Oh, mamma, not that—not that!’

‘Hush! There is nothing else. I have done it for the best. *It was your father’s wish.*’

Mary listened with a face growing ashy pale, and her beautiful eyes seemed to flicker, and her lips were not steady enough to speak.

She understood it all now.

‘You—have—asked—Cecil?’ was all she could gasp.

The humiliation of that thought overpowered her; she had to cling to the window for support.

‘I have asked Cecil. Who else should I ask? You have known him all your life. He is one of ourselves—he is no stranger. He will have the money his brother has thrown away. He will keep up the place, as the Gascoignes have always kept it up; and perhaps some day, when he has children, a son of his—of yours—will take the old name, and the title will come back. There is no one but you, Mary, if the Earl is childless.’

Mary did not know how she heard her speak, she was so stunned and transfixed with this dreadful news; she could only wonder at herself with a woful, agonized amaze. Oh, the shame and the pity of it!

‘Why was I not asked, before you did this—this thing?’ she moaned, with a piteous appeal, standing white as death, and motionless.

‘Why should I ask you, when it was *his* wish?’ Lady Bredwardine said severely. ‘I have not done it of myself; Cecil understands—he knows why. He will not think you have a voice in it. He is

willing—he is more than willing—he has loved you all his life. He is not selfish like Tristram. I can trust you with him, Mary—you and this place.’

How could Mary tell her mother that this could never be? The horror of the dreadful humiliation was not more terrible to her than the thought of crossing her in this scheme that she had set her heart upon. She remembered what Dr. Boulton had said: that she must not be crossed or excited. How could she answer her mother without running a terrible risk? She made an involuntary gesture with her upraised hand to stop the revelation, and she dropped it again, and stood speechless, with her head drooping on her bosom, wringing her hands. She looked an image of grief and shame. Her heart had quite failed her.

‘Cecil is coming to-morrow,’ her ladyship went on, pausing in her walk to confront the trembling girl, with her dark eyes blazing and her wasted fingers twisting together. ‘He is coming to ask

you to marry him—to get the answer from your own lips. What will you say to him, Mary?’

Mary Gascoigne stood white and trembling, not daring to look up. How could she answer this sudden question? She could not bring herself to utter a falsehood; she could not find any ambiguous words; she could only stand silent and confounded, with her head drooping and her hands caught together in a pitiful clasp.

Lady Bredwardine came over to her side, and put her arms around her.

‘For my sake, dearest—for your father’s sake; it is *his* wish, remember; I have not done this of myself. You will give Cecil the answer he seeks!’

Mary shrank away from her mother with a deprecating gesture. She could find no words to answer her.

‘Why do you not speak?’ Lady Bredwardine said severely. ‘Why do you hesitate? It is for your good. Would *he* have wished it if it had not been for your good? It would kill me—if—if you

disobeyed him in this. It is not possible you could do this wicked thing——’

Her voice shook, and a faint groan escaped from her lips, and she pressed her hand to her side ; and then Mary saw that her face was working strangely, and her lips were twitching. It was this that decided her.

‘Oh, mamma, mamma!’ she sobbed, ‘I would do anything to save you from pain.’

She got the Countess into a chair and held some water to her quivering lips, and for some minutes mother and daughter were silent, clasping each other’s hands, while the sad sunset light faded away and the misty twilight closed around them.

When the Countess was sufficiently recovered to go to her room, Mary was left sitting there alone, feeling guilty and miserable, and unable to subdue the wild storm of weeping that had come upon her. She had promised Lady Bredwardine to accept Cecil.

Cecil came for his answer the next day. He

came early, as befits a wooer ; and he came with an eager step and a light heart. He was assured of his answer before he came ; there was not a shade of anxiety on his brow.

He had come up that broad avenue beneath the beeches hundreds of times before, but he had never remarked before to-day what a remarkably fine avenue it was. There was not another like it in the county. There was a changed aspect in all the familiar things—the house and the grounds ; the park, with its breadth of greenness and its noble trees, its broad stretches of sunshine and shadow ; the violet tones of the hills ; the songs of the birds, and the shimmer of the leaves as he passed beneath them. Everything belonged to the Gascoignes so far as the eye could see. It had belonged to them for centuries. It must be a fine thing to be the owner of this old ancestral place.

Cecil looked at his future prospects with satisfaction, and already with a sense of ownership : beautiful green park, waving boughs, violet mist

and morning sunshine, all were his; and youth and love and happiness, and a million of money to boot. His cup could not have held much more.

Mary was not in the drawing-room when he went in. He was ushered this morning into the great state drawing-room, whose old-fashioned magnificence would have overawed most suitors, but it didn't overawe Cecil. He admired its handsome proportions, the fine allegorical ceiling, the beautiful carved mantelpiece, the panelled walls, the lovely old furniture, the rich embroidered hangings, the portraits looking down at him out of their carved frames.

There was a beautiful ancestress by Gainsborough, in a Court gown, with her hair dressed high, and a patch on her cheek, who looked at him with a haughty smile of recognition. She was the daughter of a marquis, and near her hung the portrait of her husband, the seventh Earl of Bredwardine, wearing his orders on his breast and the garter on his leg.

Cecil really felt they were his ancestors; he forgot all about the brewery; he knew exactly what it was to be the descendant of a hundred earls.

Mary came in while he was examining the family pictures.

He remarked, what he had never remarked before, as he went down the long room to meet her—her resemblance to the beautiful countess in the frame, the same high-bred air and the beautiful proud face.

She was looking pale, he noticed, not flushed and downcast as he had pictured her to himself as he came up the avenue. She was not at all downcast or nervous. She was cool and collected, and listened to all Cecil had to say without betraying any agitation or blushing, as she certainly ought to have blushed. Perhaps the daughter of—well, not exactly a hundred—a dozen or two earls does not blush when the son of a brewer honours her with the offer of his hand.

He got over the business that had brought him

to Bredwardine as quickly as he could, but Mary would not help him out in the least. She would not blush in the right place, and she never looked down at the carpet: she looked straight at him with her serious eyes all the time.

He had arranged exactly what to say as he came up the avenue; he had rehearsed his part under the beeches, with the wood-pigeons cooing above, but Mary's serious eyes drove the ordered words out of his head—they flew asunder and got in the wrong places. He stammered and hesitated, and finally blurted out the offer he had come to make like a schoolboy recalling a forgotten lesson.

He couldn't put any sentiment into it.

‘I have always admired you, Mary,’ he said awkwardly, looking down at the pattern of the carpet—‘admired you—and loved you—but I had no chance with Tristram; I was only a younger son——’ He paused for Mary to say something, but she was silent. ‘If you could look into my heart,’ he went on desperately, ‘you would see that

I have loved you all my life. I have never loved anyone but you, Mary.'

Still she gave him no encouragement. It was a difficult wooing.

'You won't say "No" because I didn't ask you before—before Lady Bredwardine gave her consent! I should have asked you years ago if I had thought I had any chance. It wasn't because I didn't love you, Mary—I had to give you up to Tristram; but now—but now——'

He paused and looked at Mary with a lover's eagerness for just a little encouragement—a blush, a flicker of an eyelid, a quiver of the white lips. If Mary had only sighed it would have helped him.

The young man saw he was not gaining ground. His eyes wandered from Mary's pale face to the beautiful ancestress in her powder and patches, and he took courage. Perhaps it was the repose that marked the caste of the Gascoignes. It wasn't like the little milliners he used to make fine speeches to

at Oxford. They were ready to blush, and smile, and dimple at a moment's notice.

'Oh, Mary,' he said, taking heart, 'if you would only believe that I love you!'

'I wish to believe you, Cecil,' Mary said quietly; 'I should be sorry to think that you came to me from any other motive—that my mother——'

'No, indeed!' the young man interrupted eagerly; 'it was not Lady Bredwardine. She gave me her consent; she has known me all my life; I am already like a son to her; she said I might try. She promised to use her influence with you, Mary.'

He really spoke with a tender vehemence that might have touched her—that would have touched most women—but his very fervour seemed to increase her reluctance.

'She has used her influence,' Mary said coldly, and he noticed that her lips quivered as she spoke of her mother. 'It is for her sake I have consented to listen to you. We have known each other all our lives, Cecil; we are not like strangers.'

But this has taken me by surprise, it has come upon me so suddenly that I can hardly bring myself to realize it. It will take a long time for me to regard you in any other light than that of an old friend and playmate. If I accept your offer, you must give me time ; you must not claim its fulfilment—until——’

She paused, and her voice shook, and he saw that her lips were quivering.

‘I will promise anything!’ he said hotly. ‘Oh, Mary, if you will only say “Yes”!’

‘You will understand,’ she said, unmoved by his ardour, ‘that it is not to be made known for six months at least ; that it is between ourselves.’

She could not bear that Tristram should think so basely of her ; she was not thinking of anyone else. She blushed scarlet, and her limbs trembled beneath her as she pleaded with her lover for delay.

‘Oh, what would Tristram say to this indecent haste?’

‘I will promise anything, darling, so long as you are mine—mine!’

It was her last protest. She suffered him to take her hand and press it to his lips. He would have liked to take her in his arms, but there was a stand-off look in Mary's eyes that stopped him. He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and then, having accomplished his errand, he went away.

'You are no longer a free woman, Mary,' he murmured, as he took his leave; 'you are mine!'

Mary shivered.

It hadn't been exactly the kind of wooing he had pictured to himself. It was not at all the wooing that poets describe. There had been no blushing or weeping; Mary's bosom hadn't heaved with a sudden storm of sighs when she consented to be his bride; and he had not folded her in his arms and ratified the agreement on her willing lips.

'By Jove!' he said, as he went back down the avenue, recalling that unemotional seal of his acceptance, 'it was like kissing an iceberg!'

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CHAPTER XIV.

THAT MILLION OF MONEY!

‘I falter where I firmly trod.’

MARY had reckoned without her mother when she made that futile agreement with Cecil that her acceptance of his suit should not be made known for six months.

Lady Bredwardine wrote at once to Sir Tristram and apprised him of the engagement. She also stipulated that the marriage should not be long deferred. Before the week was over it was in all the society papers.

There was nothing to be done but to submit to the inevitable. Mary had to receive the congratulations of the county on her engagement—her re-

engagement—with the best grace she could. The day after that interview with Cecil she sent Tristram back the ring he had given her two years ago. It was a trumpery affair with a single pearl in it—not a large pearl. It was the kind of thing a banker's clerk would have given to his suburban sweetheart. It was not at all a gift for a millionaire. Perhaps there was a meaning in it. It was only a single pearl—his pearl.

Tristram knew, when he received his poor little gift back, what it meant. He was at breakfast in the bare room of the mission when the packet was put into his hands, and Jayne was sitting opposite to him. The sight of the dear writing brought a mist before his eyes, and he opened the packet mechanically, not knowing what he should find, and the little slender gold circlet rolled out on the table. It rolled across the table under Jayne's plate.

‘A lady's ring,’ the simple fellow said, handing it back with a weak attempt at a smile.

‘It was Mary’s engagement-ring,’ Tristram said, with a catch in his voice, ‘and—and she has sent it back to me.’

Jayne had heard all about the engagement, and why it was broken off. He thought Mary had done quite right. She could not marry a man with a divided heart.

‘She could do nothing else, dear fellow,’ Jayne said kindly. ‘She has acted like a sensible girl.’

Tristram bowed his face on his hands, and Jayne could see his shoulders heaving and his breath coming hard. He was such a poor fellow; he couldn’t control his feelings. He was not made of the stuff those old saints Mary read about were made of.

‘Oh, you don’t know what she was to me!’ the poor fellow sobbed. ‘I loved her better than anything in the world; she was my pearl.’

‘You have lost her, but you have found another pearl—the Pearl of great price,’ Jayne said, laying his hand on his shoulder. ‘I am sure you have

not done this thing in a hurry. You counted the cost before you gave up father and mother and house and lands—and wife—for the Gospel's sake.'

'Oh, yes; I counted the cost, or I thought that I had counted the cost. I did not know it would be so hard.'

'If you had——'

Jayne did not finish the question, but he looked at him with his kind, grave eyes, out of which he could not keep the unspoken rebuke.

'If I had, I should never have done it!' Tristram cried passionately. 'I—I am only a man, Jayne; I am not a saint, like you. I loved Mary with all my soul. I knew how noble she was, how unlike other women, and—and I thought she would understand me. I did not think it would come to this, that she would give me up.'

He took up the little circlet of gold and put it in his waistcoat pocket. He could not bear to look at it.

Jayne could not find a single word with which

to comfort him. He took him out with him after breakfast into a poor street where he had some visiting to do. He would see real sorrow here—sorrow and disease, and suffering, quite unmerited suffering, and poverty. There is nothing like comparing one's trials with other people's.

In one house they went into there was a woman down with cancer. They heard her groaning as they came up the stairs. She wanted all sorts of nourishing things to support that cruel disease, but she had only weak tea and a crust beside her that a neighbour had just brought in. She had been groaning all night, the neighbour said, and she had heard her through the partition, and brought her her own meal. She had nothing else to bring her. She ought to have been in a hospital and carefully nursed, but she had no one to get her admission. She had been an out-patient until now, and now she could no longer reach so far, and she had lain down to die.

‘She will not die just yet,’ Jayne said as they

came down over the dark stairs. 'She has a great deal more to suffer before the end. She has days and nights of pain to go through, until she is wasted quite away. God only can give her patience to bear it.'

There was a sadder case on the other side of the court: a poor man afflicted with paralysis of the optic nerve, quite blind, and with some dreadful disease of the feet that prevented his moving without help—a big, heavy blind man who had to be lifted about like a baby. In the bed by which he was sitting—he had been sitting there day and night for months—his wife was dying of some painful internal complaint. The woman was weeping when Jayne and his friend entered the room, and the man was groaning. The air of the room was intolerable on this hot summer day. The sad sounds and the stifling air smote Tristram, as he stood bare-headed in the poor room, with a sudden sense of shame. What was his grief to such suffering as this—suffering that no relief could ever reach?

Jayne took him to other houses in the court; in every house there was suffering and poverty. A man slowly dying of consumption was busy at some mechanical work by the window of one room they entered, while his wife sat stitching at some slop work by another, rocking a cradle at her feet while she worked.

‘Tom is better to-day,’ she explained to Jayne when he entered; ‘he is doing a bit of work while he can; he has been at work since seven. The cough may come on any moment, and then he will have to stop.’

‘He will have to stop altogether soon,’ Jayne said with a sigh, as he came out; ‘the doctor says he cannot last many days. He is always at work between the attacks of coughing; he is so anxious to earn a little, there are so many mouths to feed—five besides the one in the cradle, and only her poor earnings.’

It was the old story: sickness and poverty and suffering. Poverty was always here; it was its

natural home, and disease had taken up its abode here lately—how could it help it, in this filthy court, with whole families crowded into a single room in this sultry summer weather? Death had been busy, too. It had carried off two children in one house, and another lay dying. Tristram had to stand aside on the stairs to let the tiny black box be carried by.

He came away sorrowful and saddened at the sight of so much evil that he was powerless to help—that was past all help but God's. He forgot his own trial in witnessing the trials and burdens laid on other men—on weaker men—and borne so bravely. It shamed him to see how poor people bore their trials, with what patience and submission, and how grateful they were for a little sympathy.

With this morning's lesson in his mind, Tristram went back to the mission, and put away that little ring of Mary's; and he put, or he strove to put, his repinings away with it. It was not so easy a task

as he had thought, to cut himself adrift from his moorings, and go on with the work he had begun, without looking back. The old Adam was not quite dead; it asserted itself at times, and then, like the man at the plough—the woman hastening across the plain—he looked back.

If he had been a strong man the sacrifice he had made would have come easier to him and been nobler. It was not at all noble if one could have looked down into his heart of hearts. His spirit was so weak and shrinking; he was always asking himself if he had done right—asking, and waiting for the answer.

This was not at all the temper of Mary's saints. Self-denial was not an hereditary virtue with the Lushingtons or the Earls of Sark. Tristram must have gone far back to some distant ancestor for that feeble germ of heroism that was always threatening to die out. A hero, a real hero, ought to believe in himself and in his mission; but Tristram had no faith in himself. He was always questioning his

motives, and asking himself if he had done right, after all. Sometimes he thought he had made a mistake—a grave mistake. He had not followed the Divine command. He had taken the rich Young Ruler, whose sad denial has been a lesson to all ages, for his example and warning. Like him, he had asked the momentous question and received the Divine answer, and he had interpreted it according to his lights. He had not been guilty of the great refusal, like the Young Ruler. He had made the great acceptance; he had left father and mother and house and lands—and more than all these—but he had stopped short at the last injunction. He had not sold all that he had and given to the poor.

He had thrown away a million of money! He didn't know what that million of money would do for the poor until he came to live among them. A hundred times a day he asked himself if he had done right in throwing it away; a hundred times a day he saw channels of usefulness for that wide

stream of gold that had been brewed in the great vats of Lushington's brewery.

He told the little Sister about his doubts when he met her the next day. He generally met her when he was about his work in those wretched courts and alleys. Wherever sickness and suffering were, the Sisters were generally to be found. The pity was, there were so few of them, and their means were so limited. They had often nothing to give but themselves, but what they had to give they gave freely, without stint—their time, their strength, their labour, their lives.* They kept nothing back.

There were tears in the little Sister's eyes when Tristram met her the next day; he met her at the door of a poor house, and she had a basket in her hand, an empty basket. Tristram offered to take it from her, but she shook her head.

'There is nothing in it,' she said with a sigh: 'it is empty, quite empty, when it ought to be full to overflowing. It ought to be full of soup and

jelly, and grapes and wine. There is a family of little children up there,' and she pointed to the staircase she had just come down, 'all sick with fever. They have been ill for a week, and two of them are delirious. The doctor has ordered them beef-tea and wine and milk every hour. It is their only chance; the fever has sapped all the strength out of them, and without nourishment, continuous nourishment, for days and weeks, perhaps, they must die. What is the use of doctors ordering these things to people who have no money and no work? The poor mother has been up with them night after night for a week; she has nothing to give them but weak gruel and this horrible lukewarm London water; nothing to cool their parched lips with; nothing to slake their dreadful thirst when they lie tossing and moaning through the night with fever. Hark! you can hear them moaning here.'

Tristram put his hand to his ear to shut out the sound that seemed like an accusation. He was

powerless to help. He could only look on like the little Sister. He hung his head and walked silently down the court by her side.

‘Oh, if we had only that million of money you have given up, Mr. Lushington!’ she said, with a little moan she could not keep back. ‘Oh, why, why did you give it up?’

It was just the question Tristram had been asking himself.

‘I did it for the best,’ he said humbly. ‘I thought it was right. I believed it was my duty to do it.’

‘Oh, I’m sure you thought you were doing right,’ she said quickly, but she could not keep a touch of impatience out of her voice; ‘but why didn’t you think of other people? A woman would not have been so hasty; she would have thought of others. She would not have thrown up this stewardship that was committed to her—this great stewardship—because the burden of it was too much for her, or because—forgive my saying so—she questioned

this great wealth having been lawfully acquired. She had nothing to do with its morality; that was a question of the past. She would not have put it aside in a napkin, and refused to trade with it in her Lord's service because she was troubled with scruples.'

Tristram's face flamed scarlet while she was speaking; he had never seen it in that light.

'You think it would have been right—to—to——'

'I am sure it would have been right!' she said, interrupting him eagerly. 'Why, the command is quite clear, "Make to yourselves friends of the Mammon of unrighteousness." What could be clearer?'

'That is not money unlawfully gained,' he said sadly. 'This—this money that I have put aside, that I have sworn never to touch, has been wrung out of the bodies and souls of men. It is blood-money; it represents the ruin of thousands of lives, the destruction of thousands of homes: it is the

price of shame and despair and death. It could bring no blessing with it.'

'That would depend upon how it was used,' the little Sister said quickly. 'It would bring showers of blessings if it were used aright. Think what a fraction of it would do now, at this moment. It would bring life and health in the place of disease and death to those poor things you just heard moaning. It would cool their parched tongues and fevered lips. They would not stop to ask if it were lawful gains!'

The little Sister was very much in earnest. She could not help speaking bitterly.

Her words went straight to Tristram's conscience. He had never seen it in this light.

Had he made a mistake, after all?

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. LOWRY LOMAX.

‘Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds.’

TRISTRAM’S quixotism had been a nine days’ wonder. Hardly nine days; the world moves so fast now that three days suffice for the world’s wonder and the world’s blame, and then all things are forgotten in the turning of the wheel.

Various things had happened to keep alive the interest in Tristram’s folly—folly the world called it, if not a stronger name. Mary Gascoigne’s engagement was on every tongue. It was so sudden and barefaced, it took the world by surprise. Some people were shocked at the indecent haste with which, having thrown over one brother, she had accepted the other.

The world said very hard things about poor Mary, and wasted a lot of pity upon Tristram. It exalted him for a time into a hero. People came from a distance—from West to East—to look at the man who had given up so much and who had been served so badly. Among the people who came to stare at him, and to listen to his addresses in the big mission hall, was a popular author who wanted to put him in a book. Perhaps it would be more correct to say authoress, as it happened to be a lady. She had no other idea but to put him in a book when she entered St. Katherine's Hall and took her seat among the unwashed crowd in the gallery. She chose the gallery at the end of the hall as better for her purpose: she could look down upon the audience and get a better view of the man she had come so far to see.

If he were the man she sought—she was always seeking for a representative man; she had such splendid ideas, and she wanted a man to represent them—he would be worth thousands of pounds to

her. She was sick of writing about dummies, impossible creatures who were always knocking their heads against the wall and bewailing their self-inflicted bruises. The world had begun to grow callous, and was indifferent to their complainings. She wanted a real man, moved by the passion of humanity which she had vainly been endeavouring to portray, to revive its drooping interest.

She found the man she sought in Tristram. From her high seat she looked down upon the motley crowd beneath, an orderly crowd of men and boys and women. There was much fustian and corduroy in the crowd, greasy with use, and neither sound nor fragrant. The ladies who made up the audience were not at all clean in their persons or choice in their lives and conversation: but they were all real men and women, hanging with rapt attention on the words that fell from the pale young orator on the platform.

He was not much of an orator, she remarked, but he had the secret of touching these people. The

lady from her high seat, looking down on the crowd beneath, saw their coarse, common faces light up as Tristram spoke. There was no mistaking the flash of recognition that lighted up every face in the crowd as some truth struck home. Tristram was not at all a great preacher ; he did not attempt to preach, he only spoke as one man to another, but he swayed the hearts of every man and woman in that motley crowd as the heart of one man.

It was exactly the man that Mrs. Lowry Lomax wanted. Here was the genuine passion of humanity that her wooden heroes had been counterfeiting so clumsily—and here was something beyond all counterfeit that her philosophy had never dreamed of.

Perhaps this was why she waited behind, when the crowd had filed out of the hall ; which—she observed with surprise—they did in silence and decorum. They might have been pouring out of a cathedral.

When they had all gone, Mrs. Lowry Lomax

went into a little bare room behind the platform and saw Tristram.

He was not expecting a lady, and he received her—well, she found him on his knees. He got up hurriedly, blushing like a school-girl.

‘This will never do!’ she said inwardly. Heroes—at least, her heroes—are not given to blushing. They are such splendid manly fellows, they never wear out the knees of their trousers; they are always up a moral tree, and have no weaknesses to blush for.

‘I hope I am not intruding,’ she said sweetly. She had a very sweet voice, and quite perfect manners. She hadn’t been giving these gracious gifts to her heroines for years and years without retaining some portion for herself. She was a handsome woman, too, with a sad, thoughtful face. She had been trying to solve a great many mysteries, to find out God’s ways, and she had not succeeded any better than other people. What she had found out had only made her sad.

‘Not at all!’ Tristram said awkwardly. He couldn’t think what the lady wanted in there, unannounced.

‘I have just heard you speaking to the people,’ she said; ‘you have found out the great secret; you have found the way to their hearts. I wanted to know something of the work you are doing in this place, so I came here to see for myself.’

‘It is not *our* work,’ Tristram said humbly; ‘we are only instruments—very poor instruments at the best. There is a great work to be done in this place if we had more workers and more means. We are a mere handful among so many, and we are crippled for want of means.’ He did not know why he was telling her this. He had no thought of asking for a subscription.

‘Ah! that is what I wanted to know, how I could help you?’ she said quickly. ‘You are doing so much here, two or three of you, among such numbers; and we outsiders are looking idly on. Tell me how I can help you.’

‘How?’ he repeated, with a smile and an involuntary gesture of his hands. Perhaps he had learnt the trick from the little Sister, who was always throwing her hands up, and shrugging her round shoulders, and doing all sorts of unconventional things, when she was moved in any way. ‘How? We want so much help; it is hard to tell what we want most, to begin with. Perhaps our chiefest want is money; we are so crippled for funds. There is nothing to be done in this place without money—nothing! We want workers, too, but we want money most. What is the good of going to people with empty hands?’

‘Exactly,’ the lady said, with her handsome eyes shining, and her fingers already tingling to help. This was the man, after all, that she had been looking for.

‘If I had known how much money was needed before I came here—I—I should not——’

‘You would not have thrown away that million?’ she said eagerly.

‘No ; perhaps not. I thought only of the work. Besides, feeling as I did, I had no right to keep a penny of that money.’

‘And you gave it all up?’

‘I gave up everything : I could do nothing less. My sister has made over to me a small legacy left her by an aunt—an aunt on my mother’s side—and I have nothing besides. Nothing to help, and men and women perishing around me day by day, when a little timely help would save them ! Oh, you don’t know what the value of money is until you see how little, how very little—the mere price of a moment’s pleasure—will save a man or woman from despair, and death—and destruction that is worse than death !’

‘I know something of this,’ she said, with a little quiver in her voice, ‘and I want to know more. I want to learn about the people, their wants and trials, and how to help them—how to help them most effectually. I don’t mean mere almsgiving. I do not believe in indiscriminate charity, and I am

sorry to say I have no faith in charity organizations. There is so much red-tape, and they do not reach the right people. One wants to go in and out among the people, and find out cases of real need. I do not think the parish clergy are any use; they relieve a few people here and there, but they are too full of their views and doctrines, and all the paraphernalia of their work, to care for the material wants of the poor.'

Tristram murmured a feeble protest.

'They do what they can, but their hands are tied, like ours, for want of funds.'

'That may be,' she said impatiently; 'but that has not always been their excuse. The Church was rich enough once; it is rich still; and it has gone in and out among the people for over a thousand years, and done little for them. There is more poverty now than ever; poverty, with the evils that follow in its train—disease, destitution, drunkenness, ignorance, vice, misery. They are all here with us now, as if the Church had never existed.

I do not think we must leave the regeneration of the world to the Church.'

'The Church is a mere handful among so many. There are thirty thousand people in this place, and only one clergyman to work among them. Only one man—think, what can he do among so many? We have strengthened his hands since we came here—since God sent us here—but what is our feeble help among these thousands? There is not only destitution and distress always here, and sickness and suffering, but there is indifference and drunkenness. The Church has done what she could. She is powerless to fight single-handed against the evils in this place. Oh, you don't know what she has to contend with: the callousness of the people, the frightful stupor, resulting, perhaps, from years of neglect, the indifference, the ignorance—all these vices in league with drink to break down and overcome. Oh! she has a great work to do here, and she is waiting only for workers and funds.'

‘She is only reaping, as you say, the results of long years of neglect,’ Mrs. Lomax said. ‘She cannot complain now, after having been tried and having failed, if the work is taken out of her hands. We want newer methods and more zealous workers. We want men like you, Mr. Lushington, who have given up all—all your life—to work for the people, and with them. We want a new order, a new brotherhood, consecrated to an entire self-sacrifice, living as poor men among poor men, wrestling as men only wrestle for dear life, with the horrible problems of wrong and misery. Conventional routine will not do this, nor musical services, nor incense, nor candles, nor sacraments. These will never make up the loss of centuries of neglect. There must be a new effort, a new gospel—the gospel of humanity. It need not be preached ; it must be lived by men self-devoted to the cause. There must be no half-hearted apostles of this new dispensation : there must be entire self-devotion, complete self-sacrifice, a total self-consecration, a living service.’

She paused for breath; her eyes were shining, and her cheeks were flushed, and her bosom was heaving. She was very much in earnest. Tristram had never seen a woman so much in earnest as this strange lady, who had come in unannounced, not even the little Sister. Her earnestness took another form, and there was a different ring in it.

‘Are you ready to take the lead in this new order, Mr. Lushington? Are you ready—having given up so much—to give up all?—to live poor, among the poorest and the lost, getting face to face with them, and being one with them in that near intimacy? Are you ready to give up love and home and happiness—narrow, selfish, domestic happiness, the love of wife and little children—and live unmarried, consecrated to this great work?’

Tristram’s white face flushed as she spoke; he did not know that she was making a study of him. He thought of Mary as she spoke—

of Mary and the happiness he had given up. He had already given up all. He had nothing else to lose.

‘I would work with others,’ he said humbly; ‘but I am not fit to take the lead.’

‘Who so fit as you?’ she cried, interrupting him. ‘The leader of a new order must have some exceptional fitness—must have separated himself by some noble act from his fellows; he must be a living witness of the faith he is the exponent of. You have fulfilled all these conditions; you have set before the world an example of a self-sacrificing life. Be the mouthpiece of this new order, and you will draw hundreds of men to you; the call, coming from you, will flash and thrill through their hearts, as no other voice would reach them. Remember, the impulse always comes from individual men. Will you accept this responsibility, or will you let this great opportunity pass?’

Tristram hung his head. He did not know what to answer. He was bewildered, confused. ‘I am

not at all fit to be a leader,' he murmured. He could find no other words to say.

'Is it want of money that makes you hesitate?' she asked eagerly. 'You must not let that stand in the way of your acceptance. The money shall be found. Of what use would be an order without money? It is the sinews of your work; you can do nothing without it. There would be plenty of money forthcoming if people knew it would be rightly applied. People do not like to see their money wasted on elaborate machinery, or drivelled away in useless expenditure; they want results. You cannot blame them. They want every penny of every pound they give to find its way direct to the objects of their bounty; they don't want two-thirds of it diverted half-way, and spent upon cumbrous machinery. The money would pour in if you undertook to be the almoner of it. It would flow in in a continuous stream; there would be no end to the generosity of the rich. The abundance of the world would be yours. Oh, you don't know

how willing, how glad, people would be to give their money, if they were only assured it would be used aright. I will give you an earnest myself to begin with. I will give you the proceeds of—of——’

She stopped and looked at Tristram, with a question in her eyes, and then she remembered something, and a faint flush of colour came into her cheeks. ‘No,’ she said softly, under her breath; ‘I will not give you that. I will give you ten thousand pounds to start with.’

She was going to say that she would give Tristram the proceeds of her last book—the book of the season, the book that had made her name—she was going to give him fifteen thousand pounds, but at that moment she remembered something. She remembered that she had caught him on his knees.

Tristram murmured his broken thanks. He trembled all over; he was not accustomed to people walking in and offering him thousands of pounds. ‘What would ten thousand pounds do?’

he asked himself, as he stood flushed and trembling before her, stammering his feeble thanks.

It would provide beef-tea and wine and milk for those fever-stricken patients of the little Sister's ; it would send that poor fellow in a consumption somewhere away into the country ; it would provide an attendant, a nurse of some kind, for that blind paralytic and his dying wife ; it would provide nourishment and relief for the woman sinking with cancer. It would do these things and a great many others ; but these came uppermost in Tristram's mind, with the vision of that ten thousand pounds before him. He never knew how much could be done with ten thousand pounds until he began to speculate on the many, many ways in which it could be employed.

‘ You will think this offer over, Mr. Lushington ? ’ the lady said. ‘ And you can write to me. Remember, you can have the money whenever you like to write for it. ’

Before she went away she gave Tristram her

address. She did not give him her card ; she wrote down on a slip of paper that happened to be on the table her name and address :

‘ MRS. LOMAX,
‘ Kensington Park Gardens.’

END OF VOL. I.



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